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THE MISSION OF GREECE

By the same Author

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The Mission of Greece

Some Greek views of life in the Roman world

Edited by

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PREFACE

THIS book owes much to the following, from whose translations I have been generously permitted to quote: Mr. P. E. Matheson (*Epictetus, The Discourses and the Manual*), Mr. John Jackson (*The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*), Professor T. G. Tucker (*Plutarch, Select Essays*, vol. i), Mr. A. O. Prickard (*Plutarch, Select Essays*, vol. ii), the late Professor Phillimore (*Philostratus, Life of Apollonius of Tyana*), Messrs. H. W. and F. G. Fowler (*The Works of Lucian*). It is a special pleasure to thank two of my New College tutors, Mr. Matheson and Mr. Prickard, who have thus added to the many debts which I owe them. I have also to thank Sir William Whitla for kindly reading my proofs. All the works mentioned above are published in the series of Oxford Translations by the Clarendon Press, which, with its usual generosity, permitted me to use them. In my own renderings unimportant passages and allusions obscure to English readers have occasionally been omitted.

This book was commenced and finished in a new home. If a dedication had seemed appropriate, I should have inscribed it to the Senate, the Teaching Staff, and the Students of the Queen's University, Belfast, and to those many members of a hospitable people who welcomed a stranger.

R. W. L.

OCT 6 1976

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I

INTRODUCTION

In the *Pageant of Greece* I tried through translations to give a reader who knows no Greek some idea of the significance of Greek Literature. That book, dealing chiefly with the greatest writers and the classic age, perforce ignored the rich literature of the Graeco-Roman world and the three philosophies of Cynicism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism, memorable alike in themselves and for their immense influence on the lives of men. In the present volume I have tried to fill this gap, and to give some idea of the chief personalities in Greek thought and letters during the first two centuries of our era, by means of selections from their writings in translation, pieced together with sufficient comment to make them intelligible. Primarily the book is meant for the general reader, but it may interest others. The limits of school and university curricula allow many to suppose that Greek Literature comes to an end with the loss of Greek freedom, and some more advanced classical scholars know little, not only of such writers as Philostratus and Aelius Aristides, but even of Epicurus and the 'Moral Essays' of Plutarch.

It is of course right in education to study the great age and the great men. But it is a mistake to ignore the lesser stars in that great celestial system which we know as Greek philosophy and literature. Some indeed of these later writers are of prime importance. Epicurus, for example, and the Cynics were representative of permanent modes of the human mind, parents of philosophies that, once born, never die; Stoicism is one of the noblest spiritual achievements of mankind; Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Plutarch are among the great names of the human race. But apart from their individual worth all the writers with whom this volume deals have a general interest for us. All of them may be said to represent a view of life, an answer unconscious or deliberate, to the question, How shall man live? In other words, they reveal the spiritual ideals of their age. And if it is interesting at all times to know the lights by which a society tries to live, it is doubly so with a society as potent, as cultured, as modern, as the Roman Empire. Not only so, but we are here concerned

with the society in which Christianity was born and grew. The writers with which this book deals were its neighbours; their views of life were influences which it rejected or by which it was shaped. They are the rivals with which it had to compete ; and in an age when its primacy is threatened by many plausible creeds it is instructive to study the competitors with which in its infancy it was matched, and to divine what element of vitality, what principle of survival, they lacked and it possessed.

I have called this book *The Mission of Greece* because, in the years with which it deals, Hellenism underwent the change which in Christianity was marked by the words, ' Lo, we turn to the Gentiles '. *Ecce convertimur ad gentes*. So Epicurus or Zeno might have described the destiny of the philosophies which they founded and which were in effect, if not in the intention of their founders, missionary creeds. Hellenism, as a whole, became missionary. It ceased to be the private property of a tiny people and began to belong to the world. It would be almost true to say that, till the close of the fourth century B.C., Hellenism was the intense life of one community in European Greece and of a few Greek cities in Sicily and Asia Minor. Then came the Macedonian invasion and the loss of liberty. But spiritual opportunity went hand in hand with political downfall, and Greece entered on a mission which is living still. It was not a mission in our sense of the word. It was the silent and insensible influence of ideals that attracted by their own worth, and were accepted because they were felt to satisfy the profound and unquiet desire of human nature for higher things. Trade, travel, campaigning took Greeks to Egypt, throughout Asia Minor, to Syria and Palestine, to Rome. With them they took their literature, their art, their habit of mind, their way of life ; and so, unconsciously and little by little, imposed their thought, their taste, their ideals, their method and conception of science, their standards of beauty on the new worlds, vast in extent and wealth, spiritually barren or poor, which were opened in the East by Alexander's conquests, in the West by the rise of Rome. Thus without the methods of a mission Hellenism had its influence and effects, transforming, over vast areas, millions of human minds. Its aesthetic, moral, and intellectual influence dominated the kingdoms of Seleucus and Ptolemy, the Republic and Empire of Rome, and remains to-day perhaps the most powerful force

in Western civilization. In this book we shall see some of the forms which it assumed, and some of the individuals in whom it embodied itself, in the 500 years between the death of Alexander and the principate of Septimius Severus. Not all the forms nor all the individuals that represent it are worthy ; but as much must be said of the representatives of all creeds. It is at any rate characteristic of the changed role of Hellenism, that of the thirteen chief writers with whom this book deals, only three were born in Greece, and that the other ten include natives of Caria, Cappadocia, Mysia, Paphlagonia, Phoenicia, Syria, a Roman emperor, and a Phrygian slave.

We should commence by forming some idea of the world with which this book deals. The time is from 300 B. C. to A. D. 200. The scene is at first Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean ; later, the Roman Empire.

Into the system of small states which formed the Greek world at the close of the fourth century B. C., there burst, like a rush of flood water into a quiet pool, the invasion of the Macedonian armies. The Greek cities lost, generally their independence, always their political importance. They became the satellites or the victims of the great kingdoms founded by Alexander's successors in Syria, Egypt, and Macedon. A new world order replaced the old. City states gave way to Empires. Intermittent wars and confusion lasted for 150 years, within which three great philosophies were born. For the political revolution drew moral revolution in its train. The brilliant political life of the Greek states was ended, never to return, and with it died the spiritual life which it had created and nursed. So long as the Greek city survived it provided its citizens with a bulwark of social life and religion. They needed nothing more—no independent creed, no theory of the universe to fortify their souls. The city and its religion was enough. But when the city collapsed the bulwark was gone and the Greek world was defenceless against life. To defend it arose the philosophies of Cynicism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism, which offered during three tempestuous centuries an armour for the battle, a port in the storm.[1] The world unrest, which commenced with the founding of the Macedonian Empire at the close of the fourth century, lasted

[1] For these philosophies, see a brilliant chapter in G. Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion.*

about three hundred years. Half-way through this period Rome came on the scene, and the centre of political supremacy moved westwards. In a hundred years from her intervention she became mistress of the world. But peace was not yet. For fifty years more Rome herself was torn by civil dissension, and Greece and the East were ravaged, misgoverned, and impoverished. Thirty years before the commencement of our era Augustus established a world empire and a world peace. Most of the writers with whom this book deals belong to the 200 years that followed the establishment of this empire. The scene is enlarged, and embraces a world bounded roughly, in the East by the Euphrates and the Arabian desert, in the West by Britain, in the North by the Rhine and the Danube, in the South by the Sahara. Throughout this world there was peace and civilization. The centres of intellectual life are Rome, Greece, and the western coast of Asia Minor; but beyond them stretches a wide penumbra of culture, brightest in Egypt, Syria, and the Mediterranean coasts of France and Spain. This culture is essentially Greek. The Greeks lost their independence, but not their spiritual importance. Rome provided the body of the empire; Greece provided the soul.

Our ancestors were greatly impressed by the vices of the Roman world. To-day our knowledge has grown, our morality worsened. Perhaps the balance is still in our favour, but London and New York, Paris and Berlin, have little to learn in corruption from ancient Rome; and we must not suppose that Plutarch or Marcus Aurelius lived in a world infinitely more wicked than our own. If any one thinks so the pages that follow should reassure or disillusion him. In morals and civilization the society of the Roman Empire, in spite of obvious differences, was not unlike the twentieth century. It was a rich and cultured world, with the virtues and vices of culture and wealth. It was essentially a city civilization, and the cities were not dissimilar to our own. 'Almost all the cities of the Empire, especially in the Hellenistic East, had a good scientific system of drainage, an abundant water-supply even in the upper stories of the houses, provided by most skilfully built aqueducts, good public conveniences, well-paved streets and squares, covered porticoes lining the streets and destined to protect pedestrians from sun and rain, hygienic and spacious markets, particularly fish and meat markets with a copious supply of water—large and beautiful

THE MATERIAL STABILITY OF TOWN LIFE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Ruins of the 'House of Diana' at Ostia. A typical 'block' built in the second century A.D.
The upper stories were flats, the ground floor probably shops

baths in various parts of the city enabling every citizen to have his daily bath for little or nothing, extensive and well-arranged buildings for sport and exercise—gymnasia and palaestrae. For religious purposes there were splendid temples and altars, sacred woods and long rows of beautiful funeral monuments bordering the public roads outside the gates. Large and imposing public buildings appear in all the cities: *curiae* (the meeting-places of the local senates), offices of the magistrates, halls for the official *collegia* and for the voters in public elections, *basilicae* for the judges, prisons, and so forth. Others were destined for public recreation and education: theatres, circuses, stadia, amphitheatres, public libraries, *auditoria* for declamations and public lectures, and picture galleries. The private houses were mostly of good size and equipped with modern conveniences; for example, private baths, running water, good stone stairs to the upper stories.'[1] The words might almost be applied to a modern city; so might this description of Rome by a less favourable critic:

'Merchandise of gold and silver and precious stones, and of pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet and all thyine wood; and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass and iron and marble; and cinnamon and perfumes and unguents and frankincense and wine and oil and fine flour and wheat and beasts and sheep and horses and chariots and slaves and souls of men. Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls: for in one hour so great riches is come to nought.'[2]

In these great centres of commerce we should have met the sort of society which wealth and culture in any age will produce. We should feel perfectly at home among familiar phenomena. Actors and charioteers made fortunes; learned men and schoolmasters were poor. The amphitheatre was a more brutal substitute for the boxing ring and the Cup Tie. The mime appealed to the type of people who enjoy the worse types of musical comedy. The educated wrote voluminously, collected art, and travelled. They went out to see the world, and the world came to them at home. In the shops of Rome

[1] Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, p. 135.

[2] Revelation xviii. 12, 13, 16, 17.

a man could buy truffles from Africa, pheasants from the Black Sea coast, oysters from Britain, porcelain and silk from China. And for the last time for many hundred years it was possible to travel in safety and comparative comfort from York to Alexandria, from Cologne to Damascus. Such was the world in which Epictetus or Lucian lived, and its likeness to our own makes it easily intelligible. Readers unfamiliar with the classics find the atmosphere of Plato or Aristotle strange, but Lucian and Marcus Aurelius appeal to any one. The older writers are indeed the greater. But the later speak our spiritual language ; their outlook and problems are close to ours ; their world is modern and we are instinctively at home in it. There is no need of an imaginative effort to acclimatize ourselves.

Every age weaves on the plain background of its material existence the patterned tapestry of what may be called a spiritual life. Religion, intellect, art, character, social or political life may be the theme. The background, though essential to the pattern, has no value and little interest apart from it. By the fineness and permanence of the pattern which it weaves, and by that alone, a nation is judged, and takes its rank in the history of mankind. And if this book has any interest it is for the glimpses which it affords of the tapestry woven by some Greek writers on the background of a world wealthy and at peace—glimpses of some of the spiritual ideals of the Roman Empire.

We find three chief themes in this tapestry. Of the scientific ideal as we understand it, the desire of knowledge for its own sake, and the hope of controlling nature through knowledge, there is indeed little or no trace. Science there was. Galen in medicine, Heron in mathematics and mechanics, Ptolemy in optics, astronomy, and geography are eminent names. But their science was more laborious than original ; it lacks the genius and the passionate intellectual interest of a Hippocrates, an Aristotle, an Archimedes. It has no influence on the spiritual life of the age and can hardly be said to play a part in it. It is therefore ignored in this volume.

Literature, on the other hand, is prominent in our tapestry. It would be strange were it otherwise. For the human instinct is persistent to create a world of beauty and people it with

COSMOPOLITANISM IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Grave stele of a rich Palmyrene lady, second century A.D. The inscription is in Greek, 'Athanaia wife of Malchus'. Palmyra was the centre of the caravan-trade with the East

> Shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses . . .
> Forms more real than living man,
> Nurslings of immortality :

and this age had the instinct of literary creation as strongly as any of its predecessors. This sounds paradoxical. What Greek literature can the first two centuries of our era show ? There is no drama, no epic, no lyric : indeed apart from the epigram there is no poetry at all. One could hardly call Plutarch's writings literature, Lucian is little more than an essayist. But if we conclude from this that the age is barren in literature, we are wrong. Our error arises because most of the literature is lost, and we fail either to read what remains or to recognize its significance. Not Lucian or Dion or Plutarch are the real representatives of literature in this period. At least their contemporaries would not have thought so. We must look rather to the *Lives of the Sophists* by Philostratus, and find in his unfamiliar heroes its true representatives. Hard things have been said about these sophists. Yet few men have given themselves with a more unfeigned devotion to literature. They saw her in the guise of literary art. By art they understood the manipulation of language and rhythm for their own sake, and if complete mastery of these were everything, if epigram and diction and music, devoid of sense and solidity and truth, were literature, they would be supreme writers. Their work is a signal instance of wasted ability and effort, and their chief value is as sign-posts warning us of a road that leads nowhere. English Literature perhaps has never been so interested in literary form as to need the warning. But the French Symbolists might have taken it to heart, and some modern developments in painting might have profited by it. One chapter in this book is given to the ' Sophists ' ; but Aristides, who is treated from another aspect, was a famous representative of them, and Dion and Lucian belonged to the profession in early life.

Two-thirds of my chapters deal with philosophy, and the most striking figures in what I have called the spiritual tapestry of the time were philosophers. It is a point in which the Graeco-Roman world differed from, and had an advantage over our own. The truth of Christianity to-day is widely and seriously questioned, but it remains the only system of thought in the West which has any general acceptance, or indeed can

be called a system at all. Outside its fold there is only the barren and uncharted moor. The utilitarian attempt to provide an alternative is dead. Positivism is dead. Pragmatism is *in articulo mortis*. The prophets of new creeds seldom have an audience, never a congregation. A European who is not a Christian wanders to-day in a world which has no principle of union except a common disbelief; no moral clothing, except the clinging remnants of dress which it has discarded: no creed, except the intellectual absurdity of agnosticism.[1] That perhaps is a petulant way of putting it. But rarely in human history have men's minds been so chaotic, so devoid of fixed basis or principle: for an age of thought we are strangely puzzled what to think, and our confusion is apparent alike in the results of religious questionnaires or in the moral ideals implied by the posters of cinemas and by the contents of the *Daily Mail* or the *Sketch*.

An educated man in the Roman Empire was better off. Apart from Eastern and mystery religions he had the choice between three powerful philosophies, Cynicism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism—not to mention less important systems. Each of these had a firm intellectual basis, a loose-knit unity of belief and practice that enabled them to serve the purpose of a modern church. More eclectic temperaments—illustrated in this book by Plutarch and Maximus Tyrius—picked and chose, constructing some philosophic harmony of their own, in which the dominant notes are those of Plato. Never before or since have philosophers been so numerous or so powerful. Lucian is full of them, Plutarch is full, every book of the period is full. In their numbers and influence they recall the monks and ecclesiastics of a later day, and were for their time what the Church was for the Middle Ages. They are intimate with emperors, with a rough soldier like Trajan, as well as with Hadrian or Marcus Aurelius. They are retained, like chaplains, in the service of rich Romans. A mutiny breaks out and a philosopher harangues the troops on the duty of discipline. It is true that the cynical historian remarks that his speech amused some and bored most. But it could be made, because the world took philosophy seriously. What modern philosopher, on the occasion of a riot, would conceive

[1] An intellectual absurdity, because each human action implies unconsciously a theory of life, on which the agnostic is *ex hypothesi* unable to make up his mind.

himself in such a role, or dream of leaving his study to assume it ?

It is easy to explain the importance of philosophy in the years immediately preceding and following the birth of Christ. There was need for it. The fall of the Greek states before Alexander and his generals called it to activity and gave birth to the three creeds of which I have spoken. A new world came into existence. It is difficult to realize how completely the ancient city state had engrossed the activities and fenced the lives of its inhabitants. Now the city failed them. Its boundaries were broken, its religion discredited, its moral ideals overthrown. Cosmopolitanism with a confusion of ethical standards flooded in, and morality was sapped at the very moment when it was most needed. Even when the Roman Empire came things were little better. It did indeed bring peace and civic order ; but unity of moral ideals and standards it could not bring. This was the work of philosophy, which stepped in to give a direction to these *désorientés*, to tend these sheep without a shepherd, to teach the world how to live. It did its work well. Its three great differing creeds are plausible to-day. They do not leak more than any of their modern rivals ; nor has any practical philosophy come to birth since which can compare with them in influence and importance.

They are, of course, very different from their predecessors. They differ in spirit as well as in conclusions. Except Epicurus, who recalls the fifth-century writers, the later thinkers have not the freshness, the natural and effortless genius of the earlier. And they bear the mark of their time in other ways. Greek thought commenced in an attempt to understand the universe, and down to Aristotle it retains something of the excitement of an exploration. It is on a quest. Candour and originality are its marks, discovery its aim. For originality, for audacity, for detachment from prejudice and presupposition, the earlier thinkers bear the palm. For the most part they had no interest except truth. They were not called upon to provide their countrymen with a creed or way of life. But when the city life collapsed, a new call was made on philosophy. Its task was no longer the contemplation of the universe, but the provision of a creed. The motive was no longer θαῦμα, ' wonder,' as Aristotle had defined it, but the desire to save human souls. It took up its new task without

hesitation. Its character changes. The independent and disinterested speculation of an Anaxagoras or an Aristotle gives way to the provision of a practical theory of the world, a creed by which men can live. And so arise the three great philosophies of the Graeco-Roman world. They had a practical object and duty. Their purpose was to help men to live, rather than to discover truth. So Greek Philosophy, as a German writer has said, gained in breadth and lost in depth. Epicurus and Zeno had thousands of disciples where Socrates or Aristotle had one, but they cruise in shallower waters, and the plummet has been replaced by a net. A touch of dogmatism, alien from the earlier spirit, creeps in. (Thus the main doctrines of Epicurus were stereotyped and treated as something beyond criticism.) Inquiry shrinks into teaching, teaching into preaching. One is very conscious of this in Dion or Maximus Tyrius, even in Plutarch and Epictetus. They cannot be said to think or discuss; they argue little; they lay down the law, and harangue. We have no right to criticize or complain of this. It was their business as spiritual guides of the Roman world: and it explains the extent of their influence in it. But it also explains why in education we go back past them to that earlier age, when philosophy set out on the unending voyage with clear eye and free heart, the world all before it.

Finally, there is religion. The age was religious. It is noticeable that all the writers dealt with hereafter, except Lucian, can be described as theists. The theism indeed of Marcus Aurelius wavers, and that of Epicurus is a prudent compromise with public opinion. On the other hand Epictetus, Dion, Plutarch, Maximus Tyrius, Aristides, and Apollonius are not only interested in religion, but in any age would be regarded as religious men. The first three represent rational faith: Aristides, an egoistic and emotional *Schwärmerei*; Maximus might be described as a fashionable clergyman; Apollonius as the perfect theosophist. All are interesting as individuals and as types: and their background is the most momentous religious period in the history of Europe. It is the meeting of the religions of East and West. Their contact is perhaps as old as the coming of Orphism to Greece six hundred years earlier. But for centuries after that the Greek temper prevailed, and preserved, at least in literature and philosophy, its clear sky. Now across the clearness come

MYSTERY RELIGIONS AT ROME

A subterranean sanctuary of an Orphic or neo-Pythagorean community, discovered recently at Rome, near the Porta Maggiore. First century A.D.

heavy cloudbanks from the East—worlds of demons, baths in bulls' blood, miracle mongering, magic, astrology. The chief evidence for them lies outside literature, but we divine their presence, faintly in Plutarch and Lucian, and more clearly in Apollonius. It is the beginning of the end; another 200 years and the clear sky will have vanished and Hellenism be in her sleep of a thousand years.

Yet this gross and palpable darkness of superstition conceals a truth which the Greeks had ignored. Their view of life, with all its virtues and charm, was not adequate to satisfy either the human soul or truth. Their clarity was attained by ignoring the unknown. But the unknown is there. They were, as Carlyle said, too much at home in Sion: and Sion is not entirely a homely place. There was too little mystery in their universe: and the power which they had ignored asserted its claims, and in religion, as in other things, the Orient poured into the West,

'Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes.'

Since that watersmeet the spiritual history of the West has been the attempt to blend Greek thought and Oriental religion: and because the attempt has not succeeded, the stream of our intellectual life has never flowed smoothly, the West has never really been master of its soul. The Greeks knew what they wanted—the familiar fields of earth, the homely and splendid human activities, a finite sky lit by the constellations of the virtues. The East knew what it wanted—the infinite within man and without. Since East and West met in the Roman Empire Europe has wavered between the two ideals, which it has not known how to reconcile and neither of which it has been willing to resign.

But it is time to let our authors speak for themselves.[1]

[1] Perhaps the best companions to the period are Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*; Glover, *Conflict of Religions in the Roman Empire*; and Halliday, *The Pagan Background of Early Christianity*; and, in German, Wendland's great book, *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur*.

My arrangement in the following chapters is not strictly chronological. Chapters II to V deal with creators or representatives of the three great philosophical systems of the Graeco-Roman world. Chapters VI to IX deal with men who are moralists, teachers, or preachers, but adhere to

no single recognized philosophy. The subjects of the three remaining chapters are men of letters. The following table gives their dates.

CHAP.

II. Epicurus, 341–270 B. C.
III. Antisthenes, born 5th cent. B. C.
Diogenes, 403–323 B. C.
IV. Epictetus, about A. D. 50–130.
V. Marcus Aurelius, A. D. 121–180.
VI. Dion Chrysostom, A. D. 40–120.
VII. Plutarch, born about A.D. 46.

CHAP.

VIII. Maximus Tyrius, end of 2nd century A. D.
IX. Apollonius of Tyana, about A. D. 4–96.
X. Polemon, A. D. 88–145.
Herodes Atticus, A. D. 101–177.
XI. Aelius Aristides, A. D. 129–189.
XII. Lucian, (?) A. D. 120–190.

II

EPICURUS

THE words epicure and epicurean have a bad sound. Their origin was in Athens, whence they come across more than 2,000 years, charged with accumulated meanings which they have gathered in their descent. The man after whom they are called lived from 341 to 270 B. C., in an age when the falsity of the orthodox religion had become apparent to intelligent men, and when with the coming of great kingdoms the independence of the Greek States was lost for ever. It was for that age as it would be for us if Christianity had become a discredited myth, and if Britain had become a subject state in an American Empire. Politics and religion had failed men ; the bases of their lives had been cut away. They were forced to ask whether life was worth living, and if so, how it should be lived. The age gave three famous and very different answers to this practical problem.—This chapter treats one of them, the philosophy of Epicurus. It is essential to remember this practical origin of Epicureanism, Cynicism, and Stoicism. To us philosophy is something to be studied in a university, a subject which has its literature and its specialists. But these philosophies were very different. They were creeds by which human beings, plagued and puzzled by life, escaped their pains and bewilderment. A man's city was sacked, his wife and children were killed, he was ruined. Or if he had not suffered himself, he heard wars and rumours of wars around him, and never knew when they might come his way. The earth failed beneath him, and he sought firm ground among its quicksands. That is why these philosophies came into existence, made countless converts, and lasted for hundreds of years. They promised safety to sinking men ; and men believed that they gave it. We can only understand them if we remember the evils from which they offered a refuge ; we can only judge them if we study the refuge which they offered.[1]

[1] The translations in this chapter are my own. They were made before the appearance of Mr. C. Bailey's admirable edition and translation of the remains of Epicurus. The references are to the pages in Mr. Bailey's book. There is an excellent and well-written account of Epicurus by the late Prof. Wallace in *Epicureanism* (S.P.C.K.).

Epicurus was of Athenian birth, the son of a schoolmaster, and born abroad. But the setting in which we should see him is a house and garden at Athens, where from about his thirty-fifth year till his death at the age of seventy-one he lived a community life with friends and disciples, among them his three brothers, some slaves, and some women. Of his 300 treatises, on subjects as different as Love and Monarchy, Music and Diseases, only fragments remain. We can still read the will in which he left his house and garden to trustees for the use of his followers, and provided for meetings to be held in his memory on his birthday and on the twentieth of every month. His doctrines are expounded in three letters, preserved in the second-century life by Diogenes Laertes. The great poem of Lucretius is the longest extant exposition of Epicureanism: but the Epicurean temper is troubled and refracted in passing through the medium of the passionate personality of the Roman.

A Character Sketch of Epicurus

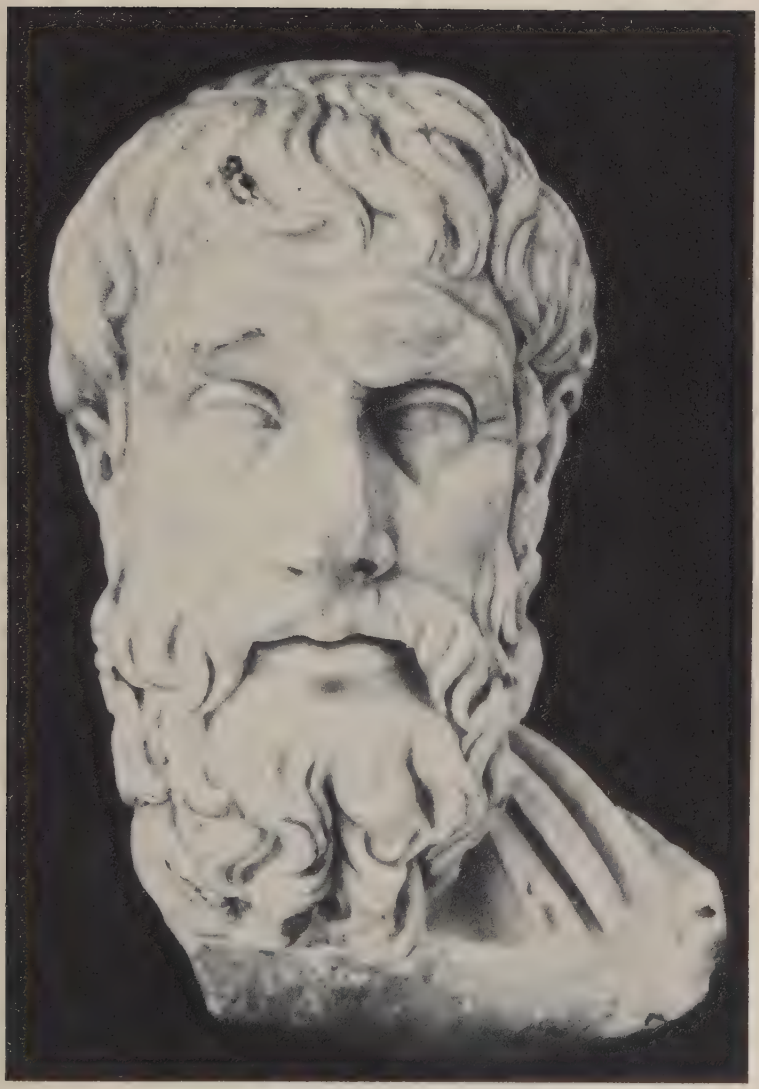
WE have evidence of his unsurpassed goodness . . . in a host of friends too numerous to be reckoned by whole cities, in the disciples who were fascinated by his doctrines, in his dutifulness to his parents, his kindness to his brothers, his humanity to his slaves (shown in his will and in the fact that they lived with him), and generally in his universal benevolence. Diocles tells us that he lived on the cheapest and simplest food. The Epicureans, he says, were contented with half a pint of thin wine and their usual drink was water. Epicurus says in a letter: 'Send me some Cythnian cheese, so that I can dine luxuriously when I wish.' [1]

Two Letters by Epicurus

(a) *To a Child*

I AND Pythocles and Hermarchus and Ctesippus reached Lampsacus quite well, and found there Themistas and our other friends well too. All 's well, if you and your mummy are well, and if you always do what daddy and Matron say,

[1] *Life*, 9 f.



EPICURUS

as you used to. For you know that the reason why I and all of us love you so much is that you always obey us.[1]

(b) *To Idomeneus*

I AM writing this letter on the last and blessed day of my life. The trouble in the bladder and the stomach is taking its course and doing its very worst. I have faced it all with a joy of the spirit—the thought of our discussions in the past. Be worthy of your relation from youth up to philosophy and to me, and take care of the children of Metrodorus.[2]

An innocent, attractive personality: very unlike what the words epicure and epicurean had led us to suspect. Whence then do they get their bad tang? And how did this harmless, kindly man come to be the most hated and worst abused of all the philosophers of Greece? To understand that we must glance at his creed, of which a summary may be read in a poem bearing the name of the great Roman Epicurean—Tennyson's *Lucretius*. In the deliberate, clear-sighted Greek way Epicurus asked himself, What is the nature of the world, what is real, what lights should men follow in order to pass through the world with success? These questions he answered as follows: There is nothing in the universe except atoms and space. Everything is material. God and our souls, as well as the earth and our bodies, are made of atoms; different kinds of atoms, but in the last resort atoms. A thorough-going materialism, and very simple. The mystery of the world disappears; everything can be reduced to atoms and explained. This part of the philosophy of Epicurus is borrowed from an earlier thinker, Democritus. The original part of his creed is his theory of life and morals.

How, he asked, are we to live with satisfaction to ourselves in this world of atoms? One thing seems certain in it—our sensations. The existence of good, of justice, of the virtues can be denied, but it cannot be denied that we feel, that some feelings are pleasant, that pleasant things are desirable, and that all human beings desire them. Therefore pleasure is good—is *the* good. The following letter contains the best consecutive exposition of his moral philosophy, and shows

[1] p. 129. [2] p. 127. Metrodorus was an Epicurean.

clearly what he meant by 'pleasure'. The passionless sentences reveal a philosophy which was to rule perhaps the greater part of those who in the ancient world troubled to have a philosophy at all. Note particularly how little Epicurus' definition of pleasure deserves its evil reputation, and how it is possible to speak of

The sober majesties
Of settled sweet Epicurean life.

WE must consider that some desires are natural and others vain, and that some natural desires are merely natural and others necessary. In the latter class some are directed to happiness, others to the absence of bodily discomfort, others to life itself. A correct theory of these enables us to refer all choices and avoidances to a matter of bodily health and mental peace, for this is the goal of human happiness. All our actions are directed to avoid pain or fear. Once we have this, all our spiritual storms vanish: the human creature feels no further want, no need to seek aught else to complete its spiritual or bodily good. We need pleasure when its absence gives us pain: when the pain is absent, the need of pleasure ceases. That is why we call pleasure the beginning and end of a happy life. For we recognize it to be a primal and natural good; in all that we choose or avoid we start from it. We resort to it in estimating all good by the standard of our feeling.

And just because it is a primal and natural good, we do not choose all pleasures. At times we pass many pleasures by when a great inconvenience follows from them. We regard many pains as preferable to pleasure, when a long endurance of the pain leads to a greater pleasure. So, though every pleasure is good because natural, yet every pleasure is not to be chosen; just as every pain, though in itself bad, is not to be avoided. All these points must be decided on a balance and consideration of advantages and disadvantages: for there are times when we treat good as bad and vice versa. Self-sufficiency is in our eyes a great good. It is not that we wish

always to possess little; but that if our possessions are few, we wish to be able to be content with a little: and we are convinced that wealth is most enjoyed by those who need it least, and that while superfluities are difficult to procure, natural things are easy. Simple flavours give as much pleasure as rich living, when they remove all the pangs of hunger, and bread and water give the keenest delight when hunger sets us down to them.

When we call pleasure the end of life, we do not mean the pleasure of the profligate or the voluptuary, as some declare, who do not know, or dissent from, or misunderstand our teaching. We mean freedom from pain of body or disturbance of mind. The life of pleasure does not come from drinking, or from revel on revel, or from sensual pleasures and banquets of fish [1] and all that the table of the rich affords. It comes from sober thought, exploring the grounds of all our choices and avoidances, and expelling the notions which expose the soul to most disturbance. Practical good sense [2] is the origin of all this and the greatest of goods. So good sense, the origin of all the other virtues, is more precious than philosophy. It teaches us that we cannot live pleasurably unless we live wisely and nobly and justly, nor wisely and nobly and justly, unless we live pleasurably. The virtues are knit into the life of pleasure, and life is inseparable from them. For whom do you rate higher than the man who has right beliefs about God, who is never afraid of death, who has calculated the aim of Nature, who realizes that pleasure is easy to procure and achieve, that pain is shortlived either in its intensity or in its duration, that necessity, which some install as the queen of the world, is partly a question of fortune and partly in our power?

Meditate these things continually day and night by yourself

[1] Note the simplicity of Greek luxury.

[2] E. puts practical wisdom above theoretical wisdom—the love of knowledge for its own sake.

or with a like-minded friend, and waking or sleeping you shall never know disquiet, but shall live as a god among men. A man who lives among immortal blessings has nothing in common with a mortal creature.[1]

Epicurus uses as a proof of pleasure being the end of life the fact that living things as soon as they are born enjoy it, while from pain they have a natural aversion not dependent on reason.[2]

The pleasures of the stomach are the beginning and root of all good : wisdom and our higher interests can be referred to them.[3]

If those things which produce the pleasures of the profligate freed the mind from fears of heaven and death and pain and taught us besides how to limit our desires, we should have no reason to find fault with them ; for they would be filled full of pleasure on every side and have no element of pain or distress—in which evil consists.[4]

We must prize beauty and virtue and the like, if they afford pleasure : otherwise we must pass them by.[5]

No pleasure is bad in itself, but the conditions that produce certain pleasures bring with them inconveniences many times greater than the pleasures.[6]

Some pleasures are necessary and natural, others are natural but not necessary, others are neither, but the creation of empty fancies. To the first class belong those which banish pains, like drink when we are thirsty ; to the second, those which elaborate the pleasure without removing the pain, like expensive foods ; to the third class belong crowns of honour and complimentary statues.[7]

Meet every desire with the questions : What will be the outcome to me if my desire is fulfilled ? What will be the outcome, if it is not ? [8]

This account of the Epicurean conception of pleasure would

[1] p. 87 f. [2] p. 171. [3] p. 135. [4] p. 97.
[5] p. 123. [6] p. 97. [7] p. 101. [8] p. 117.

be incomplete without a mention of what the master regarded as an important element in it. Friendship was part of the philosophy, as of the life, of Epicurus, and became a tradition of the school.

OF all the things that wisdom provides for life's happiness, the acquisition of friends is far the first.[1]

Friendship dances through the world, calling us to awake to happiness.[2]

Look for friends to eat and drink with before you look for food and drink. To eat without a friend's company is the life of a lion or wolf.[3]

The memory of a dead friend is sweet.[4]

Noble minds are most concerned with wisdom and friendship: the one is a mortal, the other an immortal, blessing.[5]

Epicurus told men to find their happiness in pleasure, but in those pleasures which are free from *amari aliquid*—a bitter taste. But his work remained incomplete. For, whatever happiness men may find in the pursuit of pleasure, three great terrors remain to threaten human life—the fear of death, the fear of God, the fear of the next world. In their presence how can men enjoy pleasure with a quiet mind? Death was certain. Orthodox religion spoke of a crowd of powerful and arbitrary deities, that made capricious inroads into life. And after life the poets told of an underworld where the dead were doomed to wander for ever, phantoms without blood and strength; where Furies with bloody whips, snakes with fifty heads, the monstrous dog of Hell, and a thousand shapes of fear waited to recompense deliberate or thoughtless sin. How could man be happy with these swords hanging over his head? We will see how Epicurus hoped to avert them and to defend life from the irruption of fear. The following passage shows his conception of God:

FIRST, regard God as an incorruptible and blessed creature, according to the universal conception of Him, and do not ascribe to Him any quality alien from incorrupti-

[1] p. 101. [2] p. 115. [3] Seneca, *Ep.* 20. 10. [4] p. 133. [5] p. 119.

bility or unrelated to blessedness. But believe everything of him that can preserve his blessed and incorruptible nature. The gods exist, for our knowledge of them is clear. But they are not what the populace suppose them to be. For popular belief does not make them consistently what it supposes them to be. To destroy the gods of popular belief is not impiety: impiety is to ascribe to the gods what the populace believes of them. What is blessed and incorruptible neither troubles others nor is troubled itself, so that it feels neither anger towards us nor gratitude. All emotions of that kind are a weakness.[1]

God exists then, but in His blessed and incorruptible existence He is far above anger, indeed far above any interest in this human world. And we need not fear Him, nor the punishments and terrors of a hell which the poets have invented, and which is utterly inconsistent with the true conception of the divine. But the terror of death remains. This is how Epicurus deals with it.

HABITUATE yourself to think that death is nothing to us. For all good or evil rests in sensation and death means an end to sensation. So a correct appreciation that death is nothing to us makes our mortality a pleasant thing, not by giving us an unlimited span of existence, but by releasing us from the desire for immortality. For there is nothing terrible in life to the man who has realized that there is nothing terrible in its extinction. It is idle therefore to say that we fear death, not because its presence will distress us but because expectation of it is distressing. For it is idle to be distressed by the anticipation of something whose presence does not trouble us. Death then, the most dread of all evils, is nothing to us, for while we are here, death is not, and when death is here, we are not. So death matters neither to the living or the dead, for it has nothing to do with the living and the dead no longer exist.

[1] pp. 83, 95.

The crowd may sometimes fear death as the most terrible of evils, sometimes long for it as a rest from evil. But the wise man neither renounces life nor fears death: for he does not find the first oppressive or think the second evil. Just as he chooses food for its quality, not its quantity, so with life: it is not its length that he enjoys, but its pleasantness. He who counsels the young to live nobly and the old to die nobly is foolish, not because life is desirable, but because the training that fits us to live nobly fits us to die nobly. But much worse is the saying that it is good not to be born,

But being born to pass at once beyond the gates of Death.

If a man believes this, why does he not die? Death is in his power, if his purpose is firm.

We must remember that the future is neither in, nor entirely beyond, our power, in order that we may neither absolutely expect, nor absolutely despair of, its coming.[1]

In this way Epicurus deals with the fear of God, of death, and of a future life. But he also tries to make men safe from other dangers. This is how he deals—for once not quite candidly—with pain.

PHYSICAL pain is not continuous or permanent. In an acute form it lasts a very short time; when it merely outweighs pleasure in the body, it does not continue for many days; and in the form of chronic ill health it admits a surplus of pleasure over pain.[2]

This is not convincing, and indeed in dealing with the natural changes and chances of life all Epicurus can do is to avoid and minimize. He urges his followers to expose themselves as little as possible, living sheltered lives, as he and his disciples lived in their quiet Athenian garden. Let them avoid politics, shun ambition, despise the prizes of court and camp. To be a great prince or statesman or general is to forget that we were born not for fame or power but for pleasure. It is better not to marry or have children. Otherwise we give hostages to fortune. Thus the two keywords of his philosophy

[1] p. 85. [2] p. 94.

are freedom from disturbance and self-sufficiency, and its originality and force consist in them quite as much as in his doctrine of pleasure.

PEACE (ἀταραξία) is the chief fruit of righteousness.[1]

Live unseen.[2]

Self-sufficiency is the best wealth. We aim at self-sufficiency not that we may always lead a simple and frugal life, but that we may not be afraid of leading it.[3]

If a little is not enough for a man, nothing is enough.[4]

After this glimpse of the guiding principles of Epicurus, we turn to his view of the other ideals that attract mankind.

(a) *Wealth*

IF you live by nature you will never be poor; if you live by what men think you will never be rich.[5]

Judged by nature's laws great wealth is poverty.[6]

He enjoys wealth most who needs it least.[7]

Cheerful poverty is honourable.[8]

Many on becoming rich have found in wealth not an escape from evil but a new and worse form of it.[9]

(b) *Power*

IT is for the sake of security from mankind—not that kingship or power are natural goods—that some have wished for glory and fame, believing that in this way they would be safe against men.[10]

Happiness comes, not by abundance of wealth, nor by material pomp, nor by office nor power, but by freedom from pain, by emotions in control, and by a disposition that recognizes the limits of nature.[11]

[1] p. 139. [2] Ib. [3] p. 137. [4] Ib.
[5] Sen. *Ep.* 16. 7. [6] p. 109. [7] Sen. *Ep.* 4. 10.
[8] Ib. 14. 17. [9] p. 137. [10] p. 97.
[11] p. 139.

(c) *Science*

Though the system of Epicurus rests on science, he is no believer in knowledge for its own self. He regards it as subservient to the great end of pleasure, and as having no further value.

MEN could not rid themselves of fears about the most important subjects if they were the victims of fancies of mythology, and did not know the nature of the universe. So without natural science we cannot enjoy unmixed pleasure.

If we had not been distressed by doubts about heaven and death and their possible effect on us, and by our ignorance of the limits of pains and desires, natural science would have been unnecessary.[1]

(d) *Virtue*

The audacity and consistency of Epicurus' thought may be illustrated from his treatment of the greatest of the virtues, which he reduces to mere utility.

NATURAL justice is an agreement of self-interest, made that we may avoid receiving injury from others or inflicting it on them.

There is no such thing as justice or injustice among animals which cannot make this mutual compact, or among peoples which have been unable or unwilling to do it. Justice has no independent existence.

Injustice is evil not in itself, but in virtue of the doubt and fear that it may not escape the punishments constituted for it.

A man who secretly breaks his compact cannot have confidence that he will be undetected, even if at the moment he escapes detection a thousand times: till death it remains uncertain if he will escape.

In the abstract justice is the same everywhere—utility in social compacts. But in the particular, owing to differences of place and other causes, the same thing is not just for all.

Suppose something is enacted by law but does not tend to

[1] p. 97.,

the interest of a society, this enactment has no longer the essential character of justice.

When new circumstances arise in which the accepted ideas of justice cease to be in the interest of a society, what used to be just when it was in the interest of the members of the society ceases to be just when it is no longer in their interest.[1]

The just man enjoys most peace, the unjust least.[2]

Some Sayings

I NEVER wished to please the crowd. For the crowd does not approve my knowledge, and I know nothing of what the crowd approves.[3]

For most men rest is stagnation and activity madness.[4]

The laws are made for the wise—to preserve them, not from doing, but from suffering, wrong.[5]

Praise must come from the world unsought: our business is to heal ourselves.[6]

We must try to make to-day better than yesterday, so long as we are on our journey: when we reach its end, we must be equable and glad.[7]

I have anticipated you, fortune, and fortified myself against all your secret assaults. We will not surrender ourselves to your mercy or to any other circumstance. But when fate leads us off, with a great gesture of contempt at life and at those who vainly cling to it, we will leave it with a loud cry of triumph, that we have lived well.[8]

You tell me that the promptings of the flesh make you too freely disposed to sexual indulgence. If you are neither transgressing the laws nor infringing good customs, or injuring your neighbour, or damaging your health, or wasting your livelihood, you may follow your inclinations as you like. But it is impossible not to be subject to one of these conditions. Sexual indulgence never did any one any good: and a man is lucky if it did not injure him.[9]

[1] p. 103 f. [2] p. 99. [3] p. 131. [4] p. 107. [5] p. 139.
[6] p. 117. [7] p. 113. [8] Ib. [9] p. 115.

The first element in salvation is to watch one's youth and guard against that universal defilement which follows the stings of desire.[1]

Do nothing in your life which would cause you fear, if your neighbour came to know it.[2]

The man who needs to-morrow least will find it most pleasant to meet.[3]

Philosophy

THE teaching of a philosopher which cures no human suffering is vain: medicine is useless if it does not expel the diseases of the body, philosophy, if it does not expel the diseases of the soul.[4]

Let us not delay to be philosophers in our youth or weary of it in our age. A man can never be too late or too early in pursuing spiritual health. To say that the hour to study philosophy has not yet come or that it has passed, is like saying the same of the pursuit of happiness. Young and old should study philosophy: the latter, that though old in years he may be young in blessings by grace of the past; the former, that having no fear of the future he may be at once young and old. We must meditate on that which makes for happiness, since when happiness is present we have everything, and when it is absent we do everything to obtain it. Meditate and practise what I have always taught you and regard this teaching as the elements of a good life.[5]

The Teaching of Nature

NATURE teaches us to rate the gifts of fortune low, in happiness to be prepared for its reverse, in misfortune not to think too highly of happiness, to accept calmly the gifts of fortune, and to be ready to face her supposed evils. It teaches that all the good and ill of the crowd is ephemeral, and that fortune has no lien on wisdom.[6]

[1] p. 119. [2] p. 117. [3] p. 139. [4] p. 133. [5] p. 83. [6] p. 137.

Two Views of Epicureanism

Lactantius says of it:

IT tells the ignorant that they need study no literature: it releases the niggardly from the duties of public beneficence; it forbids the lounger to serve the State, the sluggard to work, and the coward to fight. The godless are told that the gods are indifferent: the selfish are ordered to give nothing to any one—because the wise man does everything for his own sake. The recluse hears the praises of solitude, the miser learns that life can be supported on water and polenta. The man who hates his wife is presented with a list of the blessings of celibacy: the parent of a worthless offspring hears how excellent is childlessness: the children of impious parents are told that there is no natural obligation on them. The weak and luxurious are reminded that pain is the worst of evils; the brave man, that the Sage is happy even in tortures.[1]

Lucian, speaking of Epicurus, uses the following phrases:

THAT great man whose holiness and divinity of nature were not shams, who alone possessed and imparted true insight into the good, and who brought deliverance to all that consorted with him.[2] . . . The blessings conferred by his *Accepted Maxims* on his readers, the peace, tranquillity, and independence of mind which that book produces, the protection which it gives against terrors, phantoms and marvels, vain hopes and inordinate desires, the judgement and candour which it fosters, its true purging of the spirit, not with the torches and squills of magic, but with right reason, truth, and frankness.[3]

It is impossible not to admire the audacity of this attempt to build a complete ring-fence, within which the human spirit

[1] Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* iii. 17, quoted by Wallace, *Epicureanism*.
[2] *Alexander*, 61.
[3] Ib., 47. The Κύριαι Δόξαι or *Accepted Maxims* have survived.

could secure itself against the chances of this world and the next. No system has ever been so popular. It is clear and plausible. To those who ask nothing from life but a comfortable existence with a minimum of effort, anxiety, adventure, or inconvenience, Epicureanism presents a theory which explains their instincts, and justifies and assists their practice. And there is nobility in a creed which exposes clearly the folly of vice, greed, and superstition and the possibilities in a simple life. Against superstition in particular it was a great weapon: and superstition, though this age suffers little from it, has been one of the great curses of the world. No system has ever been so detested or denounced. It lends itself to abuses, as Lactantius pointed out. And if it expresses the conscious or unconscious wishes of two-thirds of the human race, it revolts and enrages the remainder. Epicureanism clips the wings of all those aspirations, imaginings, and efforts on which men soar towards the distant heaven. The eagle becomes a barn-door fowl and finds his happiness in the corn on the dunghill. Religion goes. Science goes: its uses are exhausted when it has freed men from superstition. Knowledge is not an end in itself for those who see in pleasure the goal of life. Literature goes. Epicurus called poetry 'the poet's din', spoke of 'the fooleries of Homer', and told his followers to 'set their sails and fly from all culture'. Politics go. They expose us to danger and anxiety, and distract us from our real good. There are left the Epicurean ideals of self-sufficiency and quietism, *αὐτάρκεια* and *ἀταραξία*—an egoism of the least gross and repellent, the most amiable and enlightened type, but still an egoism which ignores the saying, 'men ought so to procure serenity as they destroy not magnanimity'.[1]

[1] For criticism of Epicurus, see p. 156 f. For other allusions to Epicureanism, see pp. 152 f., 271 f., 283 f.

III

THE CYNICS

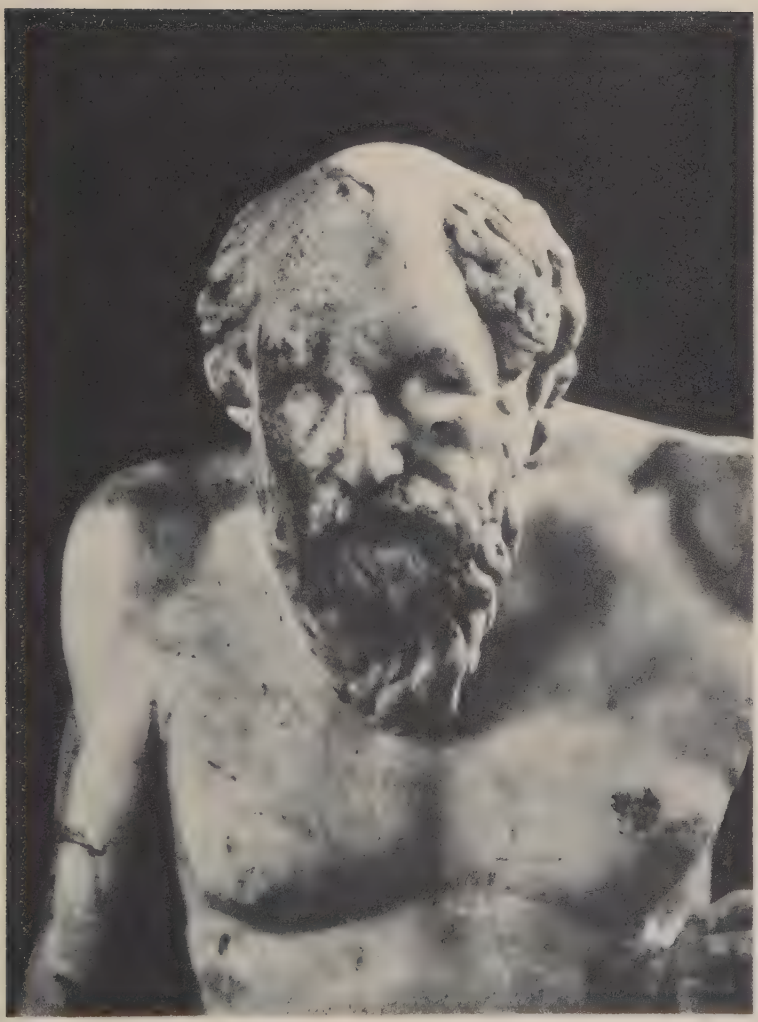
NAMES, some famous, most obscure; a number of fragments; an ideal that has had many reincarnations and continually returns to haunt the human mind—are all that remain of Cynicism. Its founder was Antisthenes (5th cent. B. C.), who, while Plato developed the ideas of Socrates into an intellectual system, deduced a philosophy of life from his iron and ascetic virtue. A more famous name is Diogenes (403–323 B. C.), who lived for a time—so legend says—in one of those great Athenian earthenware pots, and when asked by Alexander the Great, What can I do for you? replied, Get out of my light. These are the parents of Cynicism: their spiritual descendants were still active seven hundred years later, conspicuous figures in any large city of the Roman Empire—men with long beards, unkempt hair and bare feet, dirty, shirtless, their only equipment a shoddy cloak, a wallet, and a stick. Nothing external would distinguish them from the tramps of our roads. And tramps they were, but they were also philosophers, members of the great Cynic brotherhood.

No philosophy can last 700 years without containing some element of truth. What was that element in Cynicism? What drew men for centuries to a way of life which has no superficial attractions?

The name Cynic will not help us. Derived from the Greek word for a dog, and applied abusively to indicate dirty ways and brusque speech, it was accepted as an honour, but tells no more of the Cynic creed than the word Tory tells of the principles of the Conservative party. But two phrases betray what these men were seeking and thought they had found.

DIOGENES said that he thought he saw Fortune attacking him and saying, I cannot hit this mad dog.

I inherited, said Crates, from Diogenes, and he from Antisthenes, five things greater and more august than the Persian Empire—Wisdom, Self-sufficiency, Truth, Frankness, Freedom.



DIOGENES

To secure these five things the Cynic renounced wealth, pleasure, fame, position, learning, and all the smooth comforts and solemn plausibilities of the world. He cut his way out of the entanglements of life, in order to keep what could not be taken from him—freedom and goodness. The following quotations make his doctrines explicit:

Ideals

DIOGENES walked about in broad daylight with a lit lamp, saying: I am looking for a man.[1]

Asked where in Greece he had met good men, Diogenes said: I have seen no men anywhere, but I have met some children in Sparta.

Seeing a child drinking with its hands, Diogenes threw away the cup in his knapsack, saying: A child has outdone me in the simple life.

He often loudly declared that God had given man a livelihood ready to hand, but that it had been hidden from view by men themselves hunting for honey cakes, scents, and the like. So he said to a man whose servant was putting his boots on, You won't be happy till he wipes your nose as well; and that will come when you have lost the use of your hands. (D.)

Diogenes saw the servants of Anaximenes with a quantity of furniture, and asked to whom it belonged. To Anaximenes, was the reply. Is he not ashamed, said Diogenes, to be the master of all this, but not of himself?

It is natural that those men are more just whose eyes are fixed on a simple life rather than on wealth. For men who are satisfied with what they possess have least desire for what belongs to others. And this kind of wealth makes men free. (A.)

Wealth or poverty is not in a man's house but in his soul. (A.)

Goodness by itself is enough for happiness. Cynics are

[1] For fragments, see Mullach, *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*. D. indicates that Diogenes, A. that Antisthenes, is the speaker.

satisfied to live simply, using such food as will support the body, despising wealth, reputation, and high birth. Diogenes said that it is the mark of God to need nothing, and of those who are like God to need little.

Goodness is a matter of acts: it does not need many words or much knowledge. (A.)

Madness rather than pleasure. (D.)

We must seek the pleasures that follow toil, not those which precede it. (A.)

Paths to the Good Life

WISDOM is the surest castle. It is neither betrayed nor demolished. We must fortify ourselves in the impregnable reasonings of the individual mind. (A.)

Diogenes used to say that he opposed to fortune courage, to convention nature, to passion reason.

There is a double discipline—of the body and the soul. . . . Either is incomplete without the other. . . . There can be no kind of success in life without discipline, and with it everything can be overcome. The very contempt for pleasure, if we practise it, becomes delightful, and just as those who have been accustomed to an indulgent way of life are unhappy when they lose it, so those who have disciplined themselves to a contrary disposition find a pleasure in despising pleasure. (D.)

We have a fivefold gospel here—manliness, independence, self-discipline, simplicity, work. Fitly the Cynic's patron saint was Heracles—the strong man who had travelled over the world freeing mankind from the monsters that plagued them. The Cynic's stick and cloak represented the club and lion-skin of Hercules: he shared his hero's homeless, wandering life, and learnt from his famous Twelve Labours what a man should be. The Cynic is the first ascetic of the West. But he is something more than an ascetic or even a moralist. Like a true Greek he based himself on a rational principle, and tried to follow it to its logical conclusions. It led him to theories which explain the associations that have gathered

round his name. The pleasures of life were discarded as hindrances to freedom. Its conventions followed. The Cynics determined to see things as they are, and were the first to levy that war on shams which in the last century has had many soldiers from Carlyle to Shaw. They only differed from the moderns in pressing their campaign with a more remorseless logic and in practising what they taught. Thus they did not hesitate to shock propriety in their words and actions, arguing that no one need be ashamed of what was natural, and that what might be done could be openly discussed. This savage frankness is the one characteristic of them which has survived in the word 'cynical'. Some of their sayings will illustrate this deliberate attempt to banish convention.

CRATES used to say that philosophy should bring a man to a point at which generals appeared to be merely donkey-drivers.

Seeing a well-dressed man priding himself on the breadth of his purple stripe, Demonax took hold of the dress and bending towards his ear pointed and said: A sheep wore this before you—and remained a sheep.

Diogenes seeing some richly dressed young Rhodians at the Olympic festival laughed and said: Pride. Then, meeting some Spartans in shabby and dirty smocks, he said: Another kind of pride.

When Diogenes was sick to death, supporting himself with difficulty he threw himself down by a bridge close to a gymnasium, and told the man in charge to throw him into the river when he saw that he had breathed his last. So little did he care for death or burial.

Here the Cynics were attacking only the superficial conventions of society, but they turned the axe of reason against the foundations too, and it cut deep.

DIOGENES said that love should be free, a matter of consent, and did not believe in marriage. He said that there was nothing unnatural in taking anything from a temple or in eating any living thing, and that the example

of other nations proved that cannibalism was not impious. Reason showed that everything was in, and passed through, everything else. There was meat in bread and bread in vegetables.

But there were better results of this war on convention. The Cynic rejected as unnatural the distinction of slave and freeman, Greek and foreigner. Asked what was his country, Diogenes replied: I am a citizen of the world.

Starting in a practical need and advancing by a war of reason on convention, Cynicism strengthened itself by an argument on which more than 2,000 years later Rousseau was to found a philosophy. Civilization, it said, is bad, not only because it surrounds us with hindrances to freedom, but because it is unnatural. We are unhappy because our life has ceased to be natural. To find happiness we must return to Nature.

TO those who were impressed by the wealth and so-called happiness of the Persian king, Diogenes declared that they had an entirely false idea of his life, that in part it was within the reach even of the very poor, and in part there was no advantage in it. He himself did not neglect the needs of the body, as some silly persons thought, who, seeing him living in the open and enduring cold and thirst, fancied that he was indifferent to health and life. In spite of these hardships he enjoyed better health than those who were always filling their stomachs, living indoors and never knowing what heat or cold were; he enjoyed his food more, and took far more pleasure in the changes of the seasons, delighting in the coming of summer and the dispersal of the mists, and not distressed at its close, because it freed him from the excessive heat. As for fire or shade or shelter, he had little to do with them. He did not employ them before they were necessary, unlike the rest of mankind, who, because they can light fires and have houses and ample clothing, if they feel a touch of cold, run away from the air and make their bodies useless

and incapable of enduring winter; and who, because they have plenty of shade in summer and as much wine as they like to drink, never know what sunlight and natural thirst are. And so they invent injurious foods, and baths to cure them. But Diogenes experienced hunger and thirst before he ate, and regarded them as the sharpest and most effective appetizers. So he enjoyed his bread more than the rest of the world enjoy the most expensive dishes, and drank from the running stream with more pleasure than they drink Thasian wine. He said too that the temples and gymnasia in any city afforded the finest and healthiest houses, open to the air. One garment was enough for him, winter or summer. He bore the open air easily, for he had grown used to it. He wore nothing on his feet. He used to say that the feet were no more delicate than the eye or the face, which, highly sensitive as they were, bore the cold because they were always uncovered. For men were not able to go about with their eyes wrapped up like their feet. He said that the rich were like new-born babies, for they always required swaddling. He maintained that men had become effeminate, and therefore lived more miserably than animals. Animals drank water, fed on vegetables, wore no clothes all the year, never entered a house or used fire, yet lived out their natural span unless some one killed them, and were all alike strong and healthy, never needing doctor or drug. Men, on the other hand, with all their longing for life and all their devices to delay death, for the most part never reached old age, but lived full of more diseases than one can name. They collected in cities in order to escape injury by outsiders, and then proceeded to injure each other as if they had collected with that object.

When it was objected that men could not live like animals because they were unprotected and their skins were soft, without the covering of hair, which most animals have, or wings, or a stout hide, his reply was that it was their way of life that made them soft. For men as a rule avoided the sun

and the cold. The fact that their bodies were unprotected need be no inconvenience. He pointed to frogs and many other animals much softer and more unprotected than man, some of which could not only endure the open air but could live in the coldest water in winter. He pointed too to the human eye and face, which need no protection. In general, he said, there are nowhere any living things which cannot live on their own resources. Otherwise how would the earliest men have survived, who had no fire or houses or clothes or any food except that of nature? But all the ingenuity and invention and devices of later ages had not profited men much. For they had used their wisdom to procure not justice or goodness, but pleasure, and in their continual pursuit of pleasure from every source they came to live with less pleasure and more labour, and while fancying that they were providing security for themselves, as a result of all their care and forethought they died miserable deaths.[1]

Some Sayings

WHEN contradicted, stop your opponent by instructing, not by contradicting him: one does not cure a madman by going mad in turn. (A.)

Asked what he had got from philosophy Antisthenes replied, The power of living with myself.

One must acquire either reason or a rope. (A.)

It is a royal privilege to do good and be abused.

The study of words is the beginning of education. (A.)

Asked how a man can become master of himself, Diogenes replied: By applying first to himself the criticisms which he makes on others.

God is like nothing, so a statue tells us nothing of Him.

God possesses everything: the wise are His friends: friends

[1] Dion Chrysostom, vi. Dion's date was roughly A.D. 40–120, i.e. some 400 years after the birth of Cynicism.

have all things in common : therefore the wise possess everything. (A.)

Diogenes said that when he saw navigators, doctors, and philosophers, he thought man the cleverest of living things, but that when he saw prophets and interpreters of dreams and people paying attention to them, and when he saw men proud of their reputation or wealth, he thought that there was nothing sillier than human beings.

Cynic Humour

IN Samothrace a man was wondering at the number of votive offerings dedicated by those who had escaped shipwreck. There would have been far more, said Diogenes, if we had the offerings of those who did not escape.

Antisthenes being praised by some vicious men said, I am afraid I must have done something wrong.

When Antisthenes was being initiated into the Orphic rites, the priest told him that the initiated enjoy many good things in the next world. Why not die then ? said Antisthenes.

Asked what wine he liked best, Diogenes replied, Other people's.

Asked at what age one should marry, he said, When young, not yet ; when older, never. (D.)

Seeing a young man playing cottabos in the baths, he said, The better, the worse.[1] (D.)

Seeing some women hanging on an olive tree, he said, I wish that all trees would bear this kind of fruit. (D.)

When a man was reading a long essay, and gave a glimpse of a page at the end of the book with no writing on it, Diogenes said, Courage, I see land.

When asked for an offering to Cybele,[2] Antisthenes said,

[1] This remark, which I have translated literally, may be elucidated by a reference to Herbert Spencer's view that skill at billiards was evidence of a misspent youth. Cottabos was a game of skill.

[2] The mother of the gods.

I do not contribute: it is the business of the gods to support their mother.

Nothing seems more remote from Cynicism than romance. Yet a follower of this rather inhuman creed is the hero of one of few surviving romantic love-stories of antiquity.

THERE was a Theban of the name of Crates, a hunchback. After seeing a tragedy in which Telephus [1] appeared with a beggar's wallet and in utter wretchedness, he became an ardent Cynic. He sold his property—he was an aristocrat—and distributed the proceeds to his fellow citizens, to the amount of £24,000.[2] There was a girl Hipparchia, the sister of the Cynic Metrocles. She fell in love with the life and teaching of Crates, and would not look at any other suitors, however rich, well-born, or handsome. Crates was everything to her. She threatened to commit suicide, if her parents would not let her marry him. So the parents begged Crates to dissuade her. He did his best and failed: then rising and laying the Cynic attire on the ground before her, he said: You see the bridegroom and his property. Think it over. You cannot be my wife unless you will share my way of life. The girl at once made her choice, took the Cynic dress, and went through the world with him. Theodorus once quoted to her,

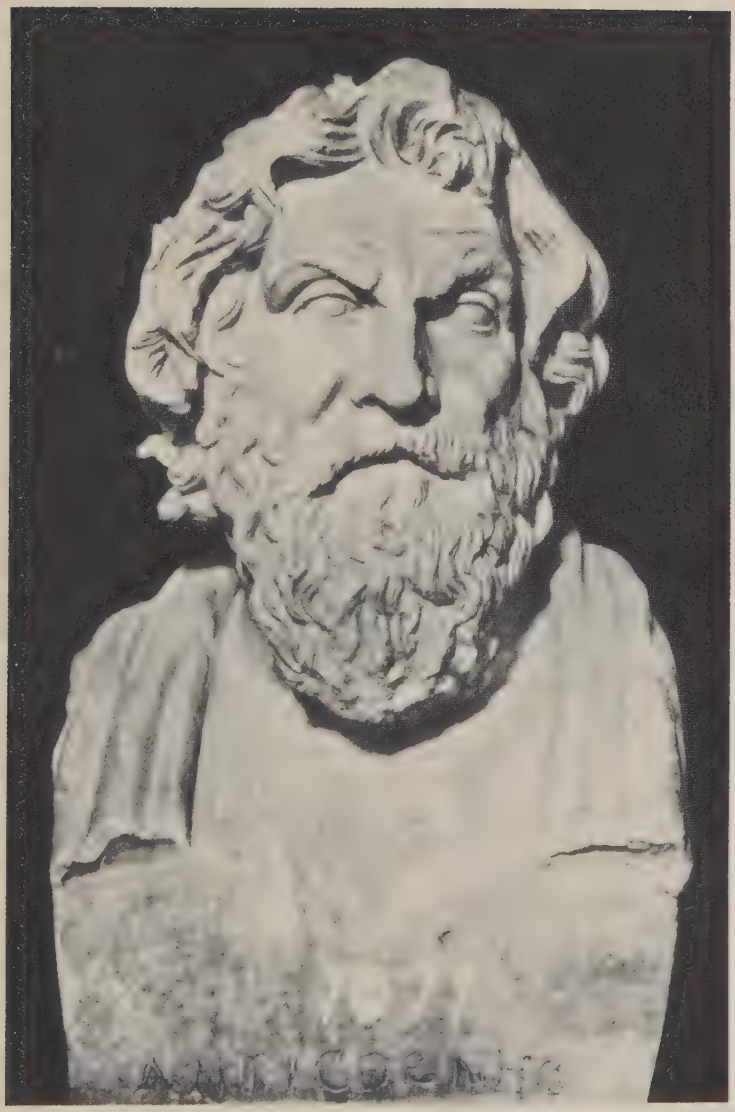
> Who is this girl who leaves shuttle and loom?

It is I, Theodorus, she replied. Do you think that I made a bad resolution, in devoting to culture (παιδεία) the time which I should have spent on weaving? Her style is rather like Plato's. She also wrote some tragedies in the loftiest philosophic manner, of which I quote the following specimen:

> I have no single country, no one home:
> All earth 's my city and my dwelling-place.

She died in old age and was buried in Boeotia.[3]

[1] A heroic king of legend who disguised himself as a beggar.
[2] Perhaps £250,000 in our money.
[3] Diog. Laert. vi. 7.



ANTISTHENES

We have had a glimpse of the Cynic creed : though it was a life rather than a creed. Its greatest weakness is its ' Cynicism '—a rejection of convention, which brutally lays bare the raw flesh to the untempered winds of reality, and proclaims that decency, propriety, reticence, are mere insincerities which honest men should disregard. That is the teaching of the *intellectus sibi permissus*, pushing aside all laws which pure intellect does not sanction. Its ruthless logic has a certain grandeur and may find defenders. But few of these will be found to live by it, and this is its condemnation. The intellectual may forget in his arguments that sentiment and convention have rights, hard to define, on which reason cannot encroach without impoverishing life. But he remembers it in his practice and disproves his theories by his actions. Apart from this, the Cynics did a great service to the world. For here, as so often, the Greeks found, centuries earlier, a road which later ages were to rediscover. With all its extravagances Cynicism contains a core of truth, and corresponds to a permanent need of the human spirit. Hence we find something like it in different forms and many lands. The Cynics are the spiritual kinsmen of the Indian Fakir, of the anchorite of the desert, of the begging friar : of Rousseau in the solitudes of the Hermitage, of Thoreau in the woods of Walden ; there is something of them in the muscular Christian and in the bearer of the white man's burden ; and something in all caravaners and campers-out.[1]

[1] For Cynic ideals, see also pp. 56f., 107f. For unfavourable portraits of Cynics, see pp. 273f. (Peregrinus) and pp. 292f. (Diogenes). There is a favourable portrait of the latter on pp. 187f.

IV

THE STOICS: EPICTETUS

In Athens there was a colonnade covered with pictures of scenes from history or legend by the greatest painter of Greece. Here in the early years of the third century B. C. might have been seen a group of men in talk. Their leader, Zeno, was a Greek from Cyprus who probably had a strain of Phoenician blood. The Greek word for porch is Stoa, and this Greek and his friends came to be known as Stoics or men of the porch. The creed that issued from their discussions was for 500 years to rule the lives of great statesmen and men of letters in Greece and Rome, and the name to be associated for ever with enduring virtue and unfaltering courage in lands then savage and among nations then unborn. It was the answer of its time to a problem as old as the world and always new. Men will certainly suffer bereavements and die themselves. Very probably they may have ill health. It is at least possible that they will suffer contempt or ill treatment from the world. Misfortune or their own fault or the injustice of others may reduce them to poverty. Is it possible for them so to fortify themselves against life that, however charged with disaster, its worst blows may be powerless, that they may be able to receive them and yet think it worth living? This problem, as we have seen, pressed very heavily in the age when Stoicism came to birth. Epicurus had given his answer to it. He suggested evasion. He advised the human snail to withdraw into its shell and shelter in a quiet corner. He told men to reduce their needs, avoid anything that could trouble their lives, and seek their happiness in simple pleasures. He offered them self-sufficiency and inward peace. Stoicism, like Cynicism, pointed to very different conduct, but made the same offer. It allowed, indeed it counselled, its followers to face all the rigours of the storm, yet promised them that they should still find life worth living, even if poverty, persecution, and violent death were their lot.

Stoicism is a development of Cynicism. It is Cynicism systematized, provided with a philosophic basis, and accommodated to the practical needs of human society. The Cynics were merely concerned to make men free. They did not

trouble to have a theory of the universe, and they were as indifferent to the state, the family, and any organized social life, as a modern anarchist. The Stoics, on the other hand, came to terms with reason and with society. They provided a theory of life which satisfied the first and was consistent with the second. The Cynic was, in theory at least, a homeless ascetic, an anarchic individualist, indifferent to systems of thought. The Stoic accepted the state and indeed was a bulwark of it; and he built up a complicated philosophy of the universe with a physic, metaphysic, logic, and psychology of his own. Here we are concerned only with his theory of morals, of which we shall see something in the teaching of two individuals who lived more than 300 years after its founder. Of the first of these, Epictetus (born about A. D. 50), we know little more than that he lived in the first century after Christ, that he was a slave and lame. It is said that his leg was broken by a brutal master. He was presumably of Asiatic birth, and his name, which means 'Acquired', was a common slave's name. He was in the household of one of the great freedmen of the Emperor Nero's court. He became free, lectured in Rome, was expelled from Italy, and took refuge in Nicopolis, on the other side of the Adriatic. He wrote no books; his teaching has survived in four books of *Discourses* and a brief *Encheiridion* or *Manual* compiled by one of his pupils, a young Roman who later had a distinguished political career. The *Discourses* are notes of lectures, replies to pupils, and conversations with all types of persons, from affected young men of society to important officials like the Commissioner of the Free Cities of Asia. The *Manual* is a brief summary of his teaching.

Little as we know of the life of Epictetus we can guess that some defensive armour against the world was needed by an Asiatic slave in Nero's court, even more than by the well-to-do Greeks and Romans who came to learn from him how to face the chances of life under a despotism. His armour was his creed. The foundation of Stoicism is the belief that God made and governs the Universe, and that we are a part of Him. On this basis is built a creed of conduct which can be put in two questions and answers: How is man to live? As Nature commands. What is Man's real Nature? His Reason, a spark of God. Man must obey it. We are composed, says Epictetus, of two elements—the body which we share with

animals, the reason which we share with God. The Reason or Governing Principle is man's real self and alone matters: he must live in the world of interests grouped round it and be indifferent to all else. But, some one objects, what if I lose my money, my children, or my life? None of those losses matter, replies the Stoic. Human good consists in acting and willing rightly. The power to do this no one can take from us. Nothing else really matters. Prosperity, success, popularity, health, cleverness are excellent things when they come our way: but we can miss them all and yet enjoy in the inner world of the spirit all the good things for which we are born. Only realize this, and poverty, death, and all evils lose their power. We shall see that they do not really matter. Our great mistake, the reason of our unhappiness, is that we forget this and suppose that they can really hurt us. Hence a contrast, continually recurring in Epictetus and vital to his creed, between 'Things in our control', that is our actions, thoughts, and feelings, and 'Things not in our control', that is health, wealth, power, life, and the like. The fatal mistake, the source of all unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life, is when men prize what is not in their control. If only they would fix their hearts on what is in their power, they would find their treasure where they are meant to find it, and no one could take it from them. The doctrine is as old as Epictetus, as modern as Christian Science. There is nothing good or evil, but thinking makes it so. It is not events that disturb men's minds, but their judgements on events. Death is nothing dreadful. The only dreadful thing about it is men's belief that it is dreadful. So, when we are hindered, disturbed, or distressed, let us never lay the blame on others but on ourselves, that is, on our judgements.[1]

Man and God

YOU are a fragment of God Himself, you have in yourself a part of Him. Why then are you ignorant of your high birth? Why do you not know whence you have come?

[1] My extracts are taken from the translation of Epictetus by Mr. P. E. Matheson (Oxford Translations). E. R. Bevan's *Stoics and Sceptics* has an admirable study of Stoicism. I have made no attempt to deal either with the Stoic philosophy as a whole or with the developments and variations in its moral theories.

Will you not remember, when you eat, who you are that eat, and whom you are feeding? When you take part in society, or training, or conversation, do you not know that it is God you are nourishing and training? You bear God about with you, poor wretch, and know it not. Do you think I speak of some external god of silver or gold? No, you bear Him about within you and are unaware that you are defiling Him with unclean thoughts and foul actions. If an image of God were present, you would not dare to do any of the things you do; yet when God Himself is present within you and sees and hears all things, you are not ashamed of thinking and acting thus: O slow to understand your nature.

If God had committed some orphan to your care, would you have neglected him so? Yet He has entrusted your own self to you, and He says, 'I had none other more trustworthy than you: keep this man for me such as he is born to be, modest, faithful, high-minded, undismayed, free from passion and tumult.' After that, do you refuse to keep him so? [1]

Remember that you are an actor in a play, and the Playwright chooses the manner of it: if he wants it short, it is short; if long, it is long. If he wants you to act a poor man you must act the part with all your powers; and so if your part be a cripple or a magistrate or a plain man. For your business is to act the character that is given you and act it well: the choice of the cast is Another's.[2]

The Supremacy of Reason

OF our faculties in general you will find that none can take cognizance of itself; none therefore has the power to approve or disapprove its own action. Our grammatical faculty, for instance: how far can that take cognizance? Only so far as to distinguish expression. Our musical faculty? Only so far as to distinguish tune. Does any one of these then take cognizance of itself? By no means. If you are writing

[1] 2. 8. [2] *Manual*, 17.

to your friend, when you want to know what words to write grammar will tell you ; but whether you should write to your friend or should not write, grammar will not tell you. And in the same way music will tell you about tunes, but whether at this precise moment you should sing and play the lyre, or should not sing nor play the lyre, it will not tell you. What will tell you then ? That faculty which takes cognizance of itself and of all things else. What is this ? The reasoning faculty : for this alone of the faculties we have received is created to comprehend even its own nature (that is to say, what it is and what it can do, and with what precious qualities it has come to us), and to comprehend all other faculties as well. For what else is it that tells us that gold is a goodly thing ? The gold does not tell us. Clearly it is the faculty which can deal with our impressions. What else is it which distinguishes the faculties of music, grammar, and the rest, testing their uses and pointing out the due seasons for their use ? It is reason and nothing else.

Zeus says, ' Epictetus, if it were possible I would have made your body and your possessions (those trifles that you prize) free and untrammelled. But as things are—never forget this—this body is not yours, it is but a clever mixture of clay. But since I could not make it free, I gave you a portion in our divinity, this faculty of impulse to act and not to act, of will to get and will to avoid, in a word the faculty which can turn impressions to right use. If you pay heed to this, and put your affairs in its keeping, you will never suffer let nor hindrance, you will not groan, you will blame no man, you will flatter none.' [1]

The Secret of Freedom

HE is free, whom none can hinder, the man who can deal with things as he wishes. But the man who can be hindered or compelled or fettered or driven into anything against his will is a slave. And who is he whom

[1] I. 1.

none can hinder? The man who fixes his aim on nothing that is not his own. And what does 'not his own' mean? All that it does not lie in our power to have or not to have, or to have of a particular quality or under particular conditions. The body then does not belong to us, its parts do not belong to us, our property does not belong to us. If then you set your heart on one of these as though it were your own, you will pay the penalty deserved by him who desires what does not belong to him. The road that leads to freedom, the only release from slavery, is this, to be able to say with your whole soul:

> Lead me, O Zeus, and lead me, Destiny:
> Whither ordained is by your decree.[1]

To secure freedom we must keep watch on our 'impressions' (*φαντασίαι*). These are the impressions of our senses, the ideas of our minds, the belief that something is pleasant or painful, or desirable, &c. Success in life depends on controlling these impressions, so that unreal goods do not attract us, nor unreal evils depress us.

'If you ask what is the true good for man, I can only say that it lies in a certain disposition of the will.'[2]

But, it may be asked, if only the soul matters, why need men trouble about material things? Why not ignore politics, industry, social life, and, shutting oneself up in the inner life, allow the perishable world to go its way? To this Epictetus gives a convincing answer, which shows why the Stoics, in spite of renouncing the world, played a great part in it.

MATERIAL things are indifferent, but how we handle them is not indifferent.

How then is one to maintain the constant and tranquil mind, and therewith the careful spirit which is not random or hasty?

You can do it if you imitate those who play dice. Counters and dice are indifferent: how do I know what is going to

[1] 4. 1. [2] 1. 8.

turn up? My business is to use what does turn up with diligence and skill. In like manner this is the principal business of life: distinguish between things, weigh them one against the other, and say, 'External things are not in my power, my will is my own. Where am I to seek what is good and what is evil? Within me, among my own possessions.' You must never use the word good or evil or benefit or injury or any such word, in connexion with other men's possessions.

'Do you mean then that outward things are to be used without care?'

By no means. For this again is evil for the will and unnatural to it. They must be used with care, for their use is not a matter of indifference, but at the same time with constancy and tranquillity, for in themselves they are indifferent. For where the true value of things is concerned, no one can hinder or compel me. I am subject to hindrance and compulsion only in matters which lie out of my power to win, which are neither good nor evil; but they may be dealt with well or ill, and this rests with me.

It is difficult to unite and combine these qualities—the diligence of a man who devotes himself to material things, and the constancy of one who disregards them—yet not impossible. You will see that those who play ball with skill behave so. No one of them discusses whether the ball is good or bad, but only how to strike it and how to receive it. We ought to play the game, so to speak, with all possible care and skill, but treat the ball itself as indifferent.[1]

The Stoic in Society

THE man who mixes with other people a good deal, either for talk or for a wine-party or generally for social purposes, must needs either grow like them himself or convert them to his likeness; for if you put a quenched coal by one that is burning, either it will put the burning one out,

[1] 2. 5.

or will catch fire from it. As the risk then is so serious, you must be cautious in indulging lightly in the society of the untrained, for it is impossible to rub up against one who is covered with soot and not get sooty oneself. What are you going to do, if he talks about gladiators, about horses, about athletes, worse still if he talks about men: 'So-and-so is bad,' 'So-and-so is good:' 'That was well done,' 'That was ill done:' again, if he mocks or jeers, or shows a malicious humour? Which of you has the faculty that Socrates had, of drawing to his side those who met him in any kind of society? How could you have? *You* must needs be converted by your untrained companions.

Why then are they stronger than you? It is because these unsound sayings of theirs are based upon judgements, but your fine words come merely from your lips: that is why they are without life or vigour, that is why a man may well loathe the sound of your exhortations and your wretched 'virtue', which you prate of so glibly.. That is how the untrained get the better of you: for judgement is powerful everywhere, judgement suffers no defeat. Therefore, until your fine ideas are firmly fastened in you, and until you acquire some power to secure them, I advise you to be cautious in associating with the untrained: otherwise anything you take note of in the lecture-room will melt away day by day like wax in the sun.[1]

The Stoic and the Wicked

IMPULSE towards a thing is originated by the feeling that it is fitting, and will to get a thing by the feeling that it is expedient for one, and it is impossible to judge one thing expedient and will to get another, and to judge one thing fitting and be impelled to another. If all this be true, why are we angry with the multitude?

[1] 3. 16.

'They are thieves,' you say, 'and robbers.'

What do you mean by thieves and robbers?

'They are gone astray and know not what is good and what is evil.'

Ought we then to be angry with them or to pity them? Only show them their error and you will see how they desist from their faults. But if their eyes are not opened, they regard nothing as superior to their own judgement.

'What!' you say. 'Ought not this robber and this adulterer to be put to death?'

Nay, say not so, but rather, 'Should I not destroy this man who is in error and delusion about the greatest matters and is blinded not merely in the vision which distinguishes white and black, but in the judgement which distinguishes good and evil?' If you put it this way, you will recognize how inhuman your words are; that it is like saying, 'Should I not kill this blind man, or this deaf one?' For if the greatest harm that can befall one is the loss of what is greatest, and a right will is the greatest thing in every one, is it not enough for him to lose this, without incurring your anger besides? Man, if you must needs harbour unnatural feelings at the misfortune of another, pity him rather than hate him; give up this spirit of offence and hatred: do not use these phrases which the backbiting multitude use, 'These accursed and pestilent fools'.[1]

On parting from Home and Friends

The following is addressed to some one who is leaving his home in Greece for Rome, and who is homesick:

WHAT are the burdens that weigh upon us and drive us out of our minds? What else but our judgements? When a man goes away and leaves the companions and the places and the society that he is used to, what else is it that weighs upon him but judgement? Children, when they

[1] 1. 18.

cry a little because their nurse has left them, forget her as soon as they are given a bit of cake.

'Do you want us to be like children too?'

No, not at all; it is not by cake I would have you influenced, but by true judgements. What do I mean? I mean the judgements that a man must study all day long, uninfluenced by anything that does not concern him, whether it be companion or place or gymnasia, or even his own body; he must remember the law and keep this before his eyes.

What is the law of God?

To guard what is your own, not to claim what is another's; to use what is given you, not to long for anything if it be not given; if anything be taken away, to give it up at once and without a struggle, with gratitude for the time you have enjoyed it, if you would not cry for your nurse and your mammy. For what difference does it make what a man is slave to, and what he depends on? How are you better than one who weeps for a mistress, if you break your heart for a paltry gymnasium and paltry colonnades and precious young men and that sort of occupation? Here comes a man complaining that he is not to drink the water of Dirce any more.[1]

What! is not the Marcian water as good as that of Dirce?

'Nay, but I was used to the other.'

Yes, and you will get used to this in turn. See how tragedy arises when fools have to face everyday events!

'When shall I see Athens again, then, and the Acropolis?'

Unhappy man, are you not content with what you see day by day? Can you set eyes on anything better or greater than the sun, the moon, the stars, the whole earth, the ocean? And if you really understand Him that governs the universe, and if you carry Him about within you, do you still long for paltry stones and pretty rock? What will you do, then, when you are going to leave the very sun and moon? Shall you

[1] Dirce, a spring at Thebes. The Marcian water is an aqueduct in Rome.

sit crying like little children? What were you doing, then, at school? What did you hear? What did you learn? Why did you write yourself down a philosopher when you might have written the truth, saying, 'I did a few Introductions and read Chrysippus' sayings, but I never entered the door of a philosopher. What share have I in the calling of Socrates, who lived and died so nobly, or of Diogenes'? Can you imagine one of them weeping or indignant, because he is not going to see this man or that, or be in Athens or in Corinth, but in Susa, if it so chance, or Ecbatana?

Will you not be weaned at last, as children are, and take more solid food, and cease to cry 'nurse' and 'mammy', cries for old women's ears?

'But I shall distress my friends', you say, 'by departing.'

You will distress them? No, you will not distress them; what distresses them and you is judgement. What can you do then? Get rid of your judgement: theirs, if they do well, they will get rid of themselves, or they will sorrow for it and have themselves to thank. Man, be bold, that you may have peace and freedom and a lofty mind. Lift up your neck at last, as one released from slavery. Have courage to look up to God and say, 'Deal with me hereafter as Thou wilt, I am at one with Thee, I am Thine. I flinch from nothing so long as Thou thinkest it good. Lead me where Thou wilt, put on me what raiment Thou wilt. Wouldst Thou have me hold office, or eschew it, stay or fly, be poor or rich? For all this I will defend Thee before men.'[1]

In Illness, Misfortune, Bereavement, and Death

ONE ought to say as each hardship comes: 'I was practising for *this*, I was training for *this*.' God says to you, 'Give me a proof, whether you have kept the rules of wrestling—eaten the proper food, trained, and obeyed the trainer.' After that, are you going to play the coward

[1] 2. 16.

when the moment of action comes? If now is the time for fever, take your fever in the right way; if for thirst, thirst in the right way; if for hunger, hunger aright. Is it not in your power? Who will hinder you? The physician will hinder you from drinking, but he cannot hinder you from thirsting aright: he will hinder you from eating, but he cannot hinder you from hungering in the right way.

'But I want to study.'

Why are you a student? Slave, is it not that you may be happy and have peace of mind? Is it not that you may conform to nature and so live your life? What hinders you in a fever from keeping your Governing Principle in accord with nature? Here is the test of the matter, this is how the philosopher is proved. For fever too is a part of life, like walking, sailing, travelling. Do you read when you are walking? No. Nor do you in a fever: but if you walk aright, you have done your part as a walker; if you bear your fever aright, you have done your part as a sick man. What does bearing fever rightly mean? It means not to blame God or man, not to be crushed by what happens, to await death in a right spirit, to do what you are bidden; when the physician comes in, not to be afraid of what he may say, and if he says, 'You are doing well', not to be overjoyed: for what good is there in that? What good had you when you were in health? It means not to be disheartened if he says, 'You are doing badly'; for what does 'doing badly' mean? It means drawing near the dissolution of the soul from the body. What is there to fear in that? If you do not draw near now, shall you not draw near later? [1]

I have submitted my will to God. He wills that I should have a fever; I will it too. He wills that I should have an impulse. I will it too. He wills that I should will to get a thing. I too will it. He wills that I should get something, and I wish it; He wills that I should not, I wish it no more.

[1] 3. 10.

I am willing then (if He wills it) to die or be put on the rack. Who can hinder me any more against my own judgement or put compulsion on me? I am as safe as Zeus.

I act as cautious travellers do. A man has heard that the road is infested by robbers; he does not dare to venture on it alone, but waits for company—a legate, or a quaestor, or a proconsul—and joining him he passes safely on the road. The prudent man does the same in the world. In the world are many haunts of robbers, tyrants, storms, distresses, chances of losing what is dearest. 'Where is a man to escape? How is he to go on his way unrobbed? What company is he to wait for that he may pass through in safety? To whom is he to join himself? To this or that rich man or consular? What is the good of that? Your great man himself is stripped, and utters mourning and lamentation. What if my fellow traveller turns against me himself to rob me? What am I to do? I will be "a friend of Caesar"; if I am his companion no one will do me wrong. But first, how many things must I endure and undergo to become a distinguished person! How often must I suffer robbery and from how many! And then, if I rise to distinction, even Caesar is mortal. And if some circumstance lead him to become my enemy, where, I ask, is it better for me to retire? To the wilderness? Why, does not fever come there? What is to become of me then? Is it impossible to find a travelling companion who is safe, trustworthy, strong, proof against attack?' Thus he reflects and comes to understand that if he attaches himself to God, he will pass through the world in safety.

'What do you mean by "attach" himself?'

That what God wills, he may will too, and what God wills not, he may not will either.

How then is this to be done?

How else, but by examining the purposes of God and His governance of the world? What has He given me to be my own and independent, what has He reserved for Himself?

He has given me all that lies within the sphere of my choice, and has put it in my hands, unfettered, unhindered. How could He make my clay body free from hindrance? My property, my chattels, my honour, my children, my wife, He made subject to the revolution of the universe. Why then do I fight against God? Why do I will what is not for me to will, what is not given me to hold under all conditions, but to hold only as it is given and so far as it is given?

Suppose He that gave takes away. Why then do I resist? I shall not merely be silly, if I try to compel Him that is stronger; first of all I shall be doing wrong. For whence did I bring what I have into the world? My father gave them me. And who gave them him? Who is it that has made the sun, and the fruits of the earth, and the seasons, and the union and fellowship of men with one another?

You have received everything, nay your very self, from Another, and yet you complain and blame the Giver, if He takes anything away from you. Who are you and for what have you come? Did not He bring you into the world? Did not He show you the light? Has He not given you fellow workers? Has He not given you senses too, and reason? And in what character did He bring you into life? Was it not as a mortal, one who should live upon earth with his little portion of flesh and behold God's governance and share for a little while in His pageant and His festival? Will you not then look at the pageant and the festal gathering as long as it is given you, and then, when God leads you forth, go away with an obeisance to Him and thanksgiving for what you have heard and seen?

'No, I want to go on feasting.'

Yes, those at the Mysteries too want to go on with the ceremony, and those at Olympia to see fresh competitors, but the festival is at an end. Leave it and depart, in a thankful and modest spirit; make room for others. Others must come into being, even as you did, and being born must have room

and dwellings and necessaries. But if the first comers do not retire, what is left for them? Why will nothing satisfy or content you? Why do you crowd the world's room?

'Yes, but I want my wife and my children to be with me.'

Are they yours? Are they not His who gave them? Are they not His who has made you? Will you not give up what is not yours, and give way to Him who is stronger than you?

'Why then did He bring me into the world on these terms?'

Depart, if it does not suit you. God has no need of a querulous spectator. He needs men who join in the feast and in the dance, ready to applaud and glorify and praise the festival. But the impatient and miserable He will gladly see left outside the festival: for even when they were there they did not behave as at a festival nor fill the place appropriate to them, but were peevish and complained of fate and fortune and their company: insensible to fortune's gifts and to their own faculties, which they have received for just the opposite—a great heart, a noble spirit, and the very freedom we are now in search of.

'For what then have I received these gifts?'

To use them.

'For how long?'

Just so long as He who lent them wills.

'But what if they are necessary for me?'

Do not set your heart on them, and they will not be. Do not tell yourself that they are necessary, and they are not.

This is what you ought to practise from sunrise to sunset, beginning with the meanest things and those most subject to injury—a jug or a cup. From this go on to a shirt, a dog, a horse, a field; and from that to yourself, your body and its members, your children, your wife, your brothers. Look carefully on all sides and fling them away from you. Purify your judgements, and see that nothing that is not your own is

attached to you or clings to you, that nothing shall give you pain if it is torn from you.[1]

It is silly to want your children and your wife and your friends to live for ever, for that means that you want what is not in your control to be in your control, and what is not your own to be yours.

Remember that you must behave in life as you would at a banquet. A dish is handed round and comes to you ; put out your hand and take it politely. It passes you ; do not stop it. It has not reached you ; do not be impatient to get it, but wait till your turn comes. Bear yourself thus towards children, wife, office, wealth, and one day you will be worthy to banquet with the gods. But if when they are set before you, you do not take them but despise them, then you shall not only share the gods' banquet, but shall share their rule.[2]

If a man is unfortunate, remember that his misfortune is his own fault ; for God created all men for happiness and peace of mind. To this end He gave men resources, giving each man some things for his own, and some not for his own—things subject to hindrance and deprivation and compulsion not for his own, but things beyond hindrance for his own. The true nature of good and evil He gave man for his own, as was natural for Him to do, who cares for us and protects us as a Father.

' Oh, but I have just parted from such a one, and he is distressed !

Why did he count as his own what was not his ? When he rejoiced to look on you why did he not reflect that you are mortal, and that you may go on a journey ? Wherefore he pays the penalty for his own foolishness. But why do you bewail yourself, and to what end ? Did not you study this distinction either ? Did you, as worthless women do, regard

[1] 4. 1. There was a great athletic festival at Olympia. ' The Mysteries ' refer to the religious festival at Eleusis.

[2] *Manual*, 13, 14.

all the things in which you took pleasure—places, persons, ways of life—as though they would always be with you? And so now you sit and weep because you do not see the same persons and pass your time in the same place. No doubt you deserve this fate—to be more wretched than rooks and ravens, who may fly where they will and change their nests, and cross the seas, without lamenting or longing for their first possessions.

'Yes, but this happens to them because they have no reason.'

Is our reason then given us by the gods for misfortune and misery, that we may continue in wretchedness and mourning? Or would you have all men to be immortal, and no one go abroad? Are we never to go away, but all to stay rooted like plants, and if one of our close friends goes abroad are we to sit and weep: and again, if he return, are we to dance and clap like little children?

Shall we not at last give up the milk of babes, and remember what we heard from the philosophers, unless we took what they said for enchanters' tales? 'This world is one city, and the substance of which it is constructed is one; and things must needs move in a cycle, one thing giving way to another, and some things must pass away, and others come into being, some must abide as they are and others must move; and the universe is full of friends—the gods first, and after them men, whom nature has made akin to one another; some of them must be with one another and others must go away, and we should rejoice in those that are with us, yet not be sad at those who go away. And man, besides being born to a high courage, and to despise all that is beyond his will, has this too for his own, that he is not rooted nor attached to the earth, but goes now to one place, now to another, at one time under the pressure of business, at another merely to see the world.'

'But my mother mourns because she does not see me.'

Why does she not take to heart these lessons? Yet I do not say that we must not take pains to prevent her lamenting; but that we must not wish absolutely for what is not ours. Another's sorrow is no concern of mine, my sorrow is my own; and so I shall absolutely check my own sorrow, for it is in my power, but another's I shall try to check only so far as I can, but not absolutely.

'How then am I to prove myself affectionate?'

In a noble and not a miserable spirit. For it is against all reason to be of an abject and broken spirit and to depend on another and to blame God or man. Prove yourself affectionate, but see that you observe these rules; if this affection of yours, or whatever you call it, is going to make you a miserable slave, it is not for your good to be affectionate. Nay, what prevents you loving a man as one who is mortal and bound to leave you? Did not Socrates love his children? Yes, but as one who is free and bears in mind that the love of the gods 'stands first'.[1]

For my own part I would wish death to overtake me occupied with nothing but the care of my will, trying to make it calm, unhindered, unconstrained, free. I would fain be found so employed, that I may be able to say to God, 'Did I transgress Thy commands? Did I use the faculties Thou gavest me to wrong purpose? Did I use my senses or my primary notions in vain? Did I ever accuse Thee? Did I ever find fault with Thy ordinance? I fell sick, when it was Thy will: so did others, but I rebelled not. I became poor when Thou didst will it, but I rejoiced in my poverty. I held no office, because it was Thy will: I never coveted office. Didst Thou ever see me gloomy for that reason? Did I ever come before Thee but with a cheerful face, ready for any commands or orders that Thou mightst give? Now it is Thy will for me to leave the festival. I go, giving all thanks to Thee, that Thou didst deign to let me share Thy festival

[1] 3. 24.

and see Thy works and understand Thy government.' May these be my thoughts, these my studies, writing or reading, when death comes upon me ! [1]

The conversation from which the following is taken is entitled ' On the Cynic's calling '. We might translate it in modern language as ' A portrait of the ideal Clergyman or Missionary '. The title indicates the close connexion between Cynicism and Stoicism, and the teaching is illustrated by the life of Dion Chrysostom (p. 106). We may compare the monastic ideal with that of Epictetus.

WHEN one of his acquaintance, who seemed inclined to the Cynic School, asked him what should be the character of the Cynic, and what was the primary conception of the school, he said, We will consider it at leisure : but this much I can tell you, that he who undertakes so great an enterprise without God's help is under God's wrath, and has no other wish but to disgrace himself in the public eye, for in a well-managed house a man does not come forward and say to himself, ' I ought to be steward ' : for, if he does, the master of the house takes notice, and when he sees him swaggering and ordering people about, he drags him away and gives him the lash. So it happens also in this great City of the Universe. Here, too, there is a Master of the House who assigns each thing its place.

You must give the matter careful thought : it is not what you think. ' I wear a coarse cloak now and shall do so then, I sleep hard now and shall still do so, I shall take to myself a wallet and a staff and begin to go about begging and reviling those I meet, and if I see any one with his hair finely dressed, or walking in scarlet, I shall rebuke him.'

If that is your impression of the Cynic's calling, give it a wide berth : do not come near it ; but if you have a true impression of it and still deem yourself not unworthy, then consider what a great enterprise you are taking in hand.

First, you must show a complete change in your conduct,

[1] 3, 5.

and must cease to accuse God or man: you must utterly put away the will to get, and must will to avoid only what lies within the sphere of your will: you must harbour no anger, wrath, envy, pity: a pretty girl, a fair name, favourites, or sweet cakes, must mean nothing to you.

You must make your Governing Principle pure, and hold fast this rule of life: 'Henceforth my mind is the material I have to work on, as the carpenter has his timber and the shoemaker his leather: my business is to deal with my impressions aright. My wretched body is nothing to me, its parts are nothing to me. Death? Let it come when it will, whether to my whole body or to a part of it. Exile? Can one be sent into exile beyond the Universe? One cannot. Wherever I go, there is the sun, there is the moon, there are the stars, dreams, auguries, conversation with the gods.'

The true Cynic must know that he is sent as a messenger from God to men concerning things good and evil, to show them that they have gone astray and are seeking the true nature of good and evil where it is not to be found, and take no thought where it really is: he must realize that he is sent 'to reconnoitre'. For the Cynic has to discover what things are friendly to men and what are hostile: and when he has accurately made his observations he must return and report the truth, not driven by fear to point out enemies where there are none, nor in any other way disturbed or confounded by his impressions.

He must then be able, if chance so offer, to come forward on the tragic stage, and with a loud voice utter the words of Socrates: 'Oh race of men, whither are ye hurrying? What are you doing, miserable creatures? You wander up and down like blind folk: you have left the true path and go away on a vain errand, you seek peace and happiness elsewhere, where it is not to be found, and believe not when another shows the way.' Why do you seek it outside? Do you seek it in the body? It is not there. If you doubt, look

at the great athletes. In property? It is not there. If you disbelieve, look at the rich men of to-day, and see how full their life is of lamentation. In political power? It is not there. If it were, then those who have twice or thrice been consuls should be happy, but they are not. Whom shall we trust on this matter? Shall we trust you who look upon their fortune from outside and are dazzled by the outward show, or the men themselves? What do they say? Listen to them, when they lament and sigh, and think their condition to be more miserable and perilous just because of their consulships and glory and distinction. Shall you find it in royalty? It is not there. If it were, Nero would have been happy.

In what then does the good reside, since it is not in these things?

It is where you think not, and will not seek for it. For if you had wished you would have found it in yourselves and would not have wandered outside and would not have sought the things of others as your own. Turn again to *yourselves*, learn to understand the primary notions which you have. Of what nature do you imagine the good to be?

'Tranquil, fraught with happiness, unhindered.'

Nay, but do you not imagine it as naturally great? Do you not imagine it as precious? Do you not imagine it as free from harm? I ask you then, in what subject must we seek for that which is tranquil and unhindered? In the slavish or the free?

'In the free.'

Your poor body then, is it slavish or free?

'We know not.'

Do you not know that it is a slave to fever, gout, ophthalmia, dysentery, the tyrant, fire, sword, everything stronger than itself?

'Yes, it is a slave.'

How then can any part of the body be still free from hin-

drance? How can that which is naturally dead—earth and clay—be great or precious? What then? Have you no element of freedom?

'Perhaps none.'

Why, who can compel you to assent to what appears false?

'No one.'

And who to refuse assent to what appears true?

'No one.'

Here then you see that there is something in you which is naturally free. What man among you can have will to get or to avoid, impulse to act or not to act, or can prepare or put an object before himself, without conceiving an impression of what is profitable or fitting?

'No one.'

Here too, then, you have free and unhindered action. Miserable men, develop this, set your minds on this, seek your good *here*.

'Nay, but how is it possible for a man who has nothing, naked, without home or hearth, in squalor, without a slave, without a city, to live a tranquil life?'

Lo, God has sent you one who shall show indeed that it is possible. 'Look at me: I have no house or city, property or slave: I sleep on the ground, I have no wife or children, no miserable palace, but only earth and sky and one poor cloak. Yet what do I lack? Am I not quit of pain and fear, am I not free? When has any of you ever seen me failing to get what I will to get, or falling into what I will to avoid? When did I blame God or man, when did I accuse any? Has any of you seen me with a gloomy face? How do I meet those of whom you stand in fear and awe? Do I not meet them as slaves? Who that sees me but thinks that he sees his king and master?' There you have the true Cynic's words; this is his character and plan of life. No, you say, what makes the Cynic is a little wallet, and a staff and a big pair of jaws; to devour or hoard everything you give him or to revile out

of season those who meet him, or to make a show of his fine shoulder!

Is this the spirit in which you mean to take in hand so great an enterprise? Think it over more carefully, know yourself, inquire of heaven, attempt not the task without God. If He advise you, know that He wishes you to become great or to receive many stripes. For this too is a very fine strand woven into the Cynic's lot: he must suffer strokes like an ass and love the very men that strike him as though he were the father or brother of all.

No, no, you say; if a man flogs you, you must stand in the midst and cry aloud, 'Caesar, what pains I suffer under your rule of peace! Let us go to the proconsul.'

What has the Cynic to do with Caesar or proconsul or any one else but Zeus, who has sent him upon earth, and whom he serves? Does he call upon any one but Him? Is he not convinced that whatever pains he suffers are God's training of him? Why, Heracles, when he was being trained by Eurystheus, did not count himself wretched, but fulfilled all his commands without shrinking: and shall this man, who is under the training and discipline of Zeus, cry aloud in indignation, if he be worthy to carry the staff of Diogenes?

'Will the Cynic', said his questioner, 'accept marriage and children as matters of prime importance?'

If, he replied, you grant me a city of wise men,[1] it may be that no one will lightly adopt the Cynic's calling. For what reason should he take upon him this manner of life? But if we assume that he does, there will be nothing to prevent him from marrying and getting children; for his wife will be like himself, and his wife's father will be like him, and his children will be brought up on these lines. But in the present constitution of the world—which is that of the battle-field—it is a question whether the Cynic should not be undistracted

[1] Observe in this reply the germ of monasticism and the arguments for a celibate clergy.

entirely, devoted to the service of God, able to go to and fro among men, not tied down to acts that befit private occasions, nor involved in personal relations, which if he violates he will cease to keep his character as a good man, and if he maintains them he will destroy the Messenger and Spy and Herald of the gods that is in him. For he must show services to his father-in-law, and render them to his wife's other relations and to herself; and so he is reduced to being a sick nurse or a general provider. Not to speak of other things, he must needs have a saucepan, to make water hot for the baby, to wash him in the bath; when his wife has had a child he must provide wool and oil for her, and a bed and a cup—the vessels mount up at once—not to mention other business and distraction. What becomes now of that king of ours who watches every interest of the public,

Trusted with rule and full of many cares,

whose duty it is to watch others, those who have married and got children, to see which of them uses his wife well, which ill, who is quarrelsome, which house is prospering and which is not, going about like a physician and feeling men's pulses?

'How then', says he, 'will you keep society going?'

By God, do you think that those who bring into the world two or three ugly little squeakers to fill their place do men greater benefit than those who exercise oversight, so far as they can, over all men, to see what they do, how they live, what they attend to, what they undutifully neglect? Do you think the Thebans reaped greater benefit from those who left them children than from Epaminondas who died childless? Did Priam, who begat fifty sons, rascals all, contribute more to society than Homer?

If we knew what a Cynic was we should not be moved or astonished at his not marrying or getting children. Man, he is parent to all men, he has men for his sons, women for his daughters; he approaches all and treats all in the spirit of

a father. Do you think he reviles those he meets because he is a busybody? He does it as a father, as a brother, and as servant of Zeus, the Father of all.

Nay, ask me, if you think well, whether he will take part in politics.

Fool, do you look for a higher form of politics than those he handles now? Is he to come forward and address an Athenian assembly on revenues or ways and means, when he ought to be discoursing to all mankind, alike to Athenians, to Corinthians, and to Romans, not about ways and means or revenues or peace and war, but about happiness and unhappiness, good fortune and bad fortune, slavery and freedom. When a man is engaged in politics of such moment, do you ask me if he is to be a politician? Nay, ask me if he is to hold office. Fool, what office is greater than this that he holds?

Yet such a one has need also of a body of a certain quality; if he come forward with a consumptive figure, thin and pale, his testimony no longer carries the same force. He must not only display mental qualities to convince the lay mind that it is possible to be good and noble without the things that they set store by, but his body must show that the plain and simple life of the open air does no harm to the body—'Look you, how my body and I bear witness to this.' As indeed Diogenes did; for he went about with the glow of health on his face, and attracted the masses by his bodily presence.

Further, the Cynic ought to have great natural grace and quickness of wit.

But above all, his Governing Principle must be purer than the sun; otherwise he must needs be a gambler and a reckless person; he will be rebuking others when he is involved in evil himself. See what this means. The kings and tyrants of this world have their armed bodyguard which enables them to rebuke certain persons and to punish those who do wrong even though they are wicked themselves, but the Cynic's conscience takes the place of arms and bodyguard and fur-

nishes him with this authority. When he sees that he has watched and toiled for men, and that his sleep has been pure, and that when sleep leaves him he is purer still, and that all the thoughts of his heart have been those of one who is a friend and servant of the gods, and who shares the rule of Zeus, and that everywhere he is ready to say :

Lead me, O Zeus, and lead me, Destiny,

and ' If thus the gods would have it, be it so '—then, I ask, why should he not have confidence to speak freely to his brothers, to his children, and in a word to his kinsfolk ?

The Cynic must have the spirit of patience in such measure as to seem to the multitude as unfeeling as a stone. Reviling or blows or insults are nothing to him ; he has given his bit of a body to any one who will, to treat it as he pleases. For he remembers that the inferior must needs be conquered by the superior, where it is inferior, and the body is inferior to the multitude, the weaker inferior to them that are stronger. He therefore never enters upon this contest, where he may be conquered, but at once resigns what does not belong to him and does not claim power over slaves. But when it comes to the will and the power of dealing with impressions then you will see what eyes he has. Is there reckless assent, is there vain impulse, will to get which fails, will to avoid which is foiled, purpose incomplete, blame, disparagement or envy ? It is on these he concentrates his attention and energy ; for the rest he snores and takes his ease, and all is peace. No one robs him of his will or masters that.

Do they master his bit of a body ?

Yes.

And his bit of property ?

Yes.

And offices and honours ?

What does he care for these ? When any one tries to frighten him with these fears he says to him, ' Get away, look

for children to frighten. They think masks fearsome, but I know that they are earthenware, and have nothing inside.'

So momentous is the profession you are thinking of. Before God I beg you to wait if you will, and look first to your equipment; for mark what Hector says to Andromache: 'Go rather to the house', he says, 'and weave':

War shall be men's concern,
All men's, and mine in chief.

So truly did he realize his own endowment and her incapacity.[1]

Stoicism was for Epictetus a way of life rather than a creed. Philosophy, in his view, existed to teach men to live better. He was thus a father confessor, a director of consciences. The following extracts show him as a practical adviser:

EVERY habit and every faculty is confirmed and strengthened by the corresponding acts, the faculty of walking by walking, that of running by running. If you wish to have a faculty for reading, read; if for writing, write. When you have not read for thirty days on end, but have done something else, you know what happens. So if you lie in bed for ten days, and then get up and try to take a fairly long walk, you will see how your legs lose their power. So generally if you wish to acquire a habit for anything, do the thing; if you do not wish to acquire the habit, abstain from doing it, and acquire the habit of doing something else instead. The same holds good in things of the mind: when you are angry, know that you have not merely done ill, but that you have strengthened the habit, and, as it were, put fuel on the fire. When you yield to carnal passion you must take account not only of this one defeat, but of the fact that you have fed your incontinence and strengthened it. For habits and faculties are bound to be affected by the corresponding actions; they are either implanted if they did not exist before, or strengthened and intensified if they were there already.

[1] 3. 22.

If, then, you wish not to be choleric, do not feed the angry habit, do not add fuel to the fire. To begin with, keep quiet, and count the days when you were not angry. I used to be angry every day, then every other day, then every three days, then every four. But if you miss thirty days, then sacrifice to God: for the habit is first weakened and then wholly destroyed.

To-day when I saw a handsome woman I did not say to myself, 'Would that she were mine!'

One has more right to be proud of that, rather than of propounding the 'Master' argument.[1]

How is this to be done? Make up your mind at last to please your true self, make up your mind to appear noble to God; set your desires on becoming pure in the presence of your pure self and God. 'Then when an impression of that sort assails you', says Plato, 'go and offer expiatory sacrifices, go as a suppliant and sacrifice to the gods who avert evil': it is enough even if 'you withdraw to the society of the good and noble' and set yourself to compare them with yourself, whether your pattern be among the living or the dead.[2]

When you appear before one of the mighty of the earth, remember that Another looks from above on what is happening and that you must please Him rather than this man. He that is above inquires of you: 'What did you say in the school about exile and prison and bonds and death and dishonour?'

I said they were indifferent.

'What do you call them now, then? Have they changed?'

No.

'Have you changed then?'

No.

'Tell me then what things are indifferent.'

Things which lie outside the will's control.

[1] i. e. A moral victory is worth more than all the intellectual successes of the schools.

[2] 2. 18.

'What conclusion follows?'

Things indifferent concern me not at all.

'Tell me also what you thought were "good things".'

A right will and a faculty of dealing rightly with impressions.

'And what did you think was the end?'

To follow Thee.

'Do you still say that?'

Yes. I say the same now as before.

Go on then into the palace in confidence and remember these things, and you shall see how a young man who has studied what he ought compares with men who have had no study.[1]

There is nothing with which Epictetus has less sympathy than theory which does not result in practice. He has no mercy on those who talk like moralists and act like any one else. This is illustrated in his advice to a philosopher who complained at having to forsake his books for active life and uncongenial society.

REMEMBER that it is not only desire of office and of wealth that makes men abject and subservient to others, but also desire of peace and leisure and travel and learning. Regard for any external thing, whatever it be, makes you subservient to another. What difference does it make, then, whether you desire to be a senator or not to be a senator, to be in office or to be out of office? What difference is there between saying, 'I am miserable, I don't know what to do, I am tied to my books like a corpse', and saying, 'I am miserable, I have no leisure to read'? For books, like salutations and office, belong to the outer world which is beyond your own control. If you deny it, tell me why do you want to read? If you are drawn by the mere pleasure of reading, or by curiosity, you are a trifler, without perseverance: but if you judge it by the true standard, what is that

[1] I. 30.

but peace of mind? If reading does not win you peace of mind, what is the good of it?

'Nay,' he says, 'it does, and that is just why I am vexed at being deprived of it.'

And what, pray, is this peace of mind, which any one can hinder—I do not mean Caesar, or Caesar's friend, but a raven, a flute-player, a fever, countless other things? Nothing is so characteristic of peace of mind as that it is continuous and unhindered. Suppose now I am called away to do something: I shall go and attend to the limits which one must observe—acting with self-respect and security, with no will to get or to avoid external things, watching men also to see what they say and how they move, and that not from ill nature, nor to blame or mock at them, but looking at myself all the time to see if I am making the same mistakes too.

Time was when I made the same mistakes as others; but I do so no more, thanks be to God. If you have acted thus and devoted yourself to this, have you done worse than if you had read a thousand lines or written as many?

You say you lack books? How, or to what end? Books are, no doubt, a preparation for life, but life itself is made up of things different from books. To ask for books is as though an athlete should complain, as he enters the arena, that he is not training outside. Life is what you were training for all along; this is what the leaping-weights, and the sawdust, and the young men you wrestled with were leading up to.

What, then, is the reason of our failure?

The reason is that we never directed our reading or our writing to the right object—that is, to dealing naturally with the impressions that come upon us when we have to act. We are content to go thus far and no farther—to understand what is said, and to be able to explain it to another, to analyse the syllogism and trace out the hypothetical argument.

If we were to study the doctrine of impulse, not to see what is said about impulse but to make our own impulses good; if

we were to study the will to get and the will to avoid to the end that we may never fail to get what we will nor fall into what we avoid, and study the doctrine of what is fitting that we may remember our true relations and may do nothing irrationally or contrary to what is fitting—then we should not have to suffer vexation at being hindered in regard to the principles we have studied, but should find contentment in acting in accordance with them, and we should cease to calculate as we have been wont to do till to-day, ' To-day I read so many lines, wrote so many ', and should reckon thus, ' To-day I governed my impulse by the precepts of the philosophers, I did not entertain desire, I avoided only things within the compass of my will, I was not awed by this man or over-persuaded by that man, but trained my faculty of patience, of abstinence, of co-operation ' : and then we should give thanks to God for the gifts for which our thanks are due.

As it is, we do not realize that we too, with a difference, behave like the multitude. Your neighbour fears that he may not become a magistrate, you fear that you may be one. Man, act not so. If you act thus, how shall you be able to say, as Socrates did, ' If God so wills, so be it ' ? Do you think that, if Socrates had set his desire on a life of leisure and daily conversation with young men in the Lyceum or the Academy, he would have cheerfully gone on all the campaigns in which he served ? Would he not have groaned and lamented, ' Unhappy that I am, wretched and miserable in the field, when I might be sunning myself in the Lyceum ' ? What ? Was this your task in life, to sun yourself ? Was it not to have a mind at peace, to be free from hindrance and encumbrance ? Nay, how would he have been Socrates any more, if he had lamented like that ? How could he have written songs of triumph in prison ?

In a word, then, remember this, that, whenever you pay regard to anything outside your will's control, you so far destroy your will. And freedom from office lies outside your will just as much as office, leisure just as much as business.

' Am I, then, to pass my life amid this tumult ? '

What do you mean by ' tumult ' ?

' Amid a multitude of men.'

' I dislike retirement, it means solitude ; I dislike a crowd, it means disturbance.'

Say not so, but, if it happens that you live alone or in a small company, call it ' peace ' and make a proper use of it : converse with yourself, train your impressions, develop your primary notions. If you chance on a crowd, call it ' games ', ' assembly ', ' festival ', and try to share the feast with your fellow men. For what sight is pleasanter for the man who loves his kind than a multitude of men ? We are pleased to see troops of horses or oxen, we delight to see a multitude of ships : does the sight of a multitude of men vex us ?

' Nay, but their clamour overwhelms me.'

Well, that is only a hindrance to your hearing : how does it affect you ? Does it affect your faculty of dealing with your impressions ? Who can hinder you from dealing naturally with the will to get and the will to avoid, the impulse to act and not to act ? What tumult can avail to touch these ?

Only remember these general principles : ' What is mine, what is not mine ? What is given me ? What does God wish me to do now ? What does He not wish ? ' A little while ago His will was that you should live a quiet life in converse with yourself, and write on these matters, read, listen, prepare yourself : you had sufficient time for this. Now He says to you, ' Now come into the conflict, show us what you have learnt, how you have trained. How long are you going to exercise yourself in solitude ? The time has now come for you to discover whether you are an athlete worthy of victory, or one of those who go about the world suffering continual defeat.' Why, then, are you vexed ? There is no conflict without a crowd : there must be many to train beforehand, many to cry applause, many stewards, many spectators.

' Yes, but I wanted to live a quiet life.'

Lament and mourn, then, as you deserve : for what greater penalty than this can fall on him who is uninstructed and disobedient to the ordinances of God, than to be distressed, to mourn, to envy—in a word, to be unhappy and miserable ? Have you no wish to free yourself from these ills ?

' And how shall I free myself ? '

Have you not often heard that you must get rid of the will to get altogether, and must will to avoid only those things which are within your control ? That you must give up everything—body, property, reputation, books, the throng, office, private life ? For if once you swerve from this path you become a slave and a subject, you are liable to hindrance and compulsion and completely at the mercy of others. But the saying of Cleanthes is ready to our need :

Lead me, O Zeus, and lead me, Destiny.

Will you have me go to Rome ? To Rome then. To Gyara ? I will go to Gyara. To Athens ? I will go to Athens. To prison ? I will go to prison. If once you say, ' When are we to get away to Athens ? ' you are lost. That wish, if unfulfilled, must make you miserable, and, if fulfilled, it must make you puffed up, elated on false grounds : again, if you are hindered, it must make you unhappy at the conflict between circumstances and your will. Give up all these things, then.

' Athens is beautiful.'

Yes, but happiness is far more beautiful—freedom from passion and disturbance, the sense that your affairs depend on no one.

Bear this in mind and rejoice in what is at hand, and be content with what the moment brings. If you see any of the principles that you have learnt and thought over being realized by you in action, rejoice over them. If you have put away bad nature and evil-speaking, or made them less ; if you have got rid of wantonness, foul speaking, recklessness, slackness ; if you are not excited by things that once excited you, or at

least not as before, then you can keep festival day by day, to-day because you behaved well in this action, to-morrow because you did well in another. How much greater cause is this for offering sacrifice than if you were made consul or prefect! These things come to you from your own self and from the gods. Remember who is the Giver, and to whom He gives and why. If you are brought up to reason thus, you need no longer raise the question, 'Where shall I be happy?' and 'Where shall I please God?' Do not men have their equal portion in all places? Do they not everywhere alike behold what comes to pass? [1]

These extracts show Stoic theory: the following—a conversation between the Emperor Vespasian and a Stoic republican—shows their practice.

VESPASIAN sent to Priscus Helvidius to forbid him to come to the Senate.

He replied: You can forbid me to be a senator; but so long as I am a senator it is my duty to take my place.

Well, come, said Vespasian, but be silent.

I will be silent, if my opinion is not asked.

But, said the Emperor, as presiding officer I am bound formally to ask it.

And I, replied Priscus, am bound to say what I think right.

If you do, I shall put you to death.

Did I ever say, said Priscus, that I was immortal? You will do your part, and I will do mine. It is yours to punish, mine to go into exile without complaining; yours to kill, mine to die without flinching.[2]

The fate of Priscus was exile and then death. He is only one of many professors of the Stoic creed who trod the same road.

It seems ungracious to criticize a noble creed. But two weaknesses in Stoicism will occur to every one. It is bracing,

[1] 4. 4. Gyara is a small island. [2] 1. 2.

but it is also depressing. The Stoic sits aloof and aloft on his peak

Beyond the arrows, shouts, and views of men :

but there is little pleasure in sitting there and we shiver in the frozen air. The things outside man's power are infinitely more numerous, if not more important, than the things within it. In the immense territory of the universe only a tiny plot is his—the soul ; and however rich the fruits of that plot he cannot but ask why he was put into a world where so much was apparently offered him, so little meant to be his. We miss the old Greek ideal of a life in which beauty, thought, and action formed a splendid unity. The Stoic is not ascetic, but his time is largely spent in renunciation.

Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren !
Das ist der ewige Gesang,
Der jedem an die Ohren klingt,
Den, unser ganzes Leben lang,
Uns heiser jede Stunde singt.

And if there must be renunciation St. Francis seems a better model than Epictetus. The Christian God looked upon creation and saw that it was good ; the Stoic God looked upon it and saw that it was ' indifferent '.

Another weakness in the Stoics is a callousness that verges on brutality. Pity to them was more than a frailty : it was wrong. They were bound to exclude it from life. For how can a man be entirely free and self-sufficient if the pains and sorrows of life can touch him at any point ? This reasoning drove Epictetus to say :

IF you kiss your child, or brother, or friend, never allow your imagination to range at large, nor allow your exultation to go as far as it will. You must remind yourself that you love a mortal, and that nothing that you love is your very own ; it is given you for the moment, not for ever nor inseparably, but like a fig or a bunch of grapes at the appointed season of the year, and if you long for it in winter you are a fool. So too if you long for your son or your friend, when it is not given you to have him, know that you are longing for a fig in winter-

time. And therefore in the very moment that you take pleasure in a thing, set before your mind the opposite impressions. What harm is there in whispering to yourself as you kiss your child, 'To-morrow you will die', and to your friend in like manner, 'To-morrow you or I shall go away, and we shall see one another no more'? [1]

Such a theory revolts us, for it runs counter not merely to our customs and conventions but to our nature.

The great weakness of Stoicism is that it is unnatural. If Zeno had lived to read Dr. McDougall's book on Social Psychology, his philosophy would have been very different. Reason would have played a less absolute part in it. He would have seen that instinct is fundamental in man: that feeling cannot be ignored; and that to pity and love are as natural as to think. He would not have based his doctrine of the love of humanity merely on reason; he would have seen in our instincts a surer foundation for it, and one that was more likely than reason to create love. His philosophy would not have been so self-centred. The Stoic is ego-centric. But, as Pascal said, 'Nous sommes pleins de choses qui nous jettent au dehors. . . . Et ainsi les philosophes ont beau dire: retirez-vous en vous-mêmes, vous y trouverez votre bien.'

If some one had complained to Zeno that he ignored the instincts and deified the reason he might have answered that it was right to do so; that instinct was a primitive force, destined to give way to a higher power, as man grew civilized. Certainly he might have urged that his philosophy fulfilled one essential function of any creed, by making its followers safe and free in the world. 'Happy', says Virgil, 'is the man who has trampled under foot every terror, doom inexorable, and the roar of the greedy river of death.' Such happiness Stoicism promised its disciples. They were to be as far beyond the changes and chances of life as any Christian. The lives of a succession of famous men and women show that Stoicism gave what it promised. It was the heroic creed of

[1] 3. 24. These words of R. L. Nettleship imply a profound criticism of Stoicism: 'The only strength for me is to be found in the sense of a personal presence everywhere. . . . Into this presence we come, not by leaving behind what are usually called earthly things or by loving them less, but by living more intensely in them and loving more what is truly lovable in them.'

an age of wars and despots, an armour of faith on the right and on the left. (What wonder if there is a touch of hardness in this child of hard times ?) Its professors laid down position, wealth, and life rather than compromise their principles, paid the forfeit with unfaltering equanimity, and were, what they proclaimed themselves, masters of their souls.[1]

[1] For a portrait of a Stoic, see p. 170. Other references to Stoicism, pp. 283, 289 f.

V

THE STOICS: MARCUS AURELIUS

THE following is a picture of country-house life about the middle of the second century after Christ. It is from a letter written by a boy to his tutor.

MY DEAR FRONTO,

We are all well. I slept a little longer than usual on account of a chill, which seems better. From five o'clock this morning till eight I read Cato's book on Agriculture, and wrote—not so deplorably as yesterday. Then I went to say good-morning to my father. Then drawing honey-water into my throat and again expelling it I fomented my larynx—I won't use the vulgar word gargled, though it is used by some good writers. After attending to my throat I joined my father and was present at the sacrifice. Thence to breakfast. What do you think I took? A morsel of bread, while the rest were devouring beans, onions, and pilchards. Then I helped to measure the grapes and sang and sweated with the labourers. At noonday I returned home. I studied a little—no good. Then I gossiped with my dear mother as she rested. I said, 'What do you think my Fronto is doing?' We argued whether she or I loved you best: then the gong went, a sign that my father has gone to the bath. After bathing in the wine-press shed supper was laid. I don't mean that we bathed in the shed, but that after the bath we supped there and amused ourselves by listening to the banter of the rustics. Then back to my bedroom, where before I turn on my side and snore, I finish my essay and write an account of the day to my beloved master. If I could long for you more, I would gladly endure the sharper pang. Farewell, my Fronto, wherever you are, my honey, my darling, my joy! What has come over me? I love you even in absence.[1]

[1] Tr. C. Bigg.

It is an odd letter, not without charm, but emotional and rather priggish—a schoolgirl's letter rather than a schoolboy's. Certainly it does not suggest that the writer was born to hold in his hands the destinies of the civilized world. Yet the youth who wrote it was Marcus Aurelius, who for nineteen years was Emperor of Rome. Nature did not cast him for the part. He was full of literary and studious enthusiasms. We hear of him fasting, sleeping on the ground with a single covering, reading at the great shows in the amphitheatre, and even at dinner when company was present. Nor is his education exactly what we expect for a future monarch. The simplicity of it; the numerous teachers of philosophy, belonging to the Stoic school, whose most famous men in the past had been steady republicans, and many of whom had lost their lives for their opinions; the absence of any military or administrative training—none of this prepares us for what Marcus became. A born monk or man of letters, one would have said, never intended for the rough work of leading armies and ruling an empire. Indeed, he is a classical example of a man set to do work for which his tastes unfitted him, and doing it well.

Now glance at the work to which he was called when at the age of thirty-nine he became ruler of the Roman world. No emperor since Augustus had had to face so formidable a task. Six years after his accession the first waves of those invasions which were to destroy the Empire broke on its frontiers. There was fighting in Britain, fighting in Germany, fighting in the East, and still worse fighting on the Danube, where Germans and Slavs poured across to the gates of Italy. This philosopher who loved peace had to exchange his books for the sword. He spent most of the last thirteen years of his life at the war, and died in camp at Vienna on the 17th of March A. D. 180. To war were added famines and repeated visitations of plague. The emperor had poor health: he was set to do work which he hated, and worst of all he was absolutely alone. His nature, as that early letter shows, was affectionate and clinging: as a young man he had congenial friendships and a happy home. But it was otherwise in his later life and days of trial. Monarchs and saints are apt, for different reasons, to be solitary. Philosophers in an army seem out of place. Marcus was monarch, saint, and philosopher. In the one place where he might have found companionship—

MARCUS AURELIUS

his home—he did not find it. His brother was weak and vicious, his son and heir brutal and vicious; his wife was indifferent to him or worse. At her death he burnt her papers unread, perhaps for fear of what they contained. We shall not do him justice unless we remember this, and note these facts in his character and circumstances, which make his achievement the more remarkable. No one can read the following extracts without seeing that he was not a man careless of public opinion or born to stand by himself, that, on the contrary, he longed for sympathy and was keenly sensitive to what others said and thought, and yet that in mature life it was his fate to be spiritually alone, among men who disliked or despised him.

IF this suffices not, and thou must needs have a less philosophic canon to touch thy heart, nothing will tend more to reconcile thee with death than to consider the objects thou wilt leave behind, and the morals of those with whom thy soul will no longer be involved. For though to take offence at these is no part of thy duty,—which is rather to care for them and to deal gently with their errors,—yet it behoves thee to remember that thy departure will not be made from the midst of men who share thy principles. One cause alone, if even that, might perchance have plucked thee back and detained thee in life: if that life might have been spent in the company of those who owned allegiance to the same faith. But now that thou seest what utter weariness springs from this discord of man with man, let thy prayer be: 'Hasten thy coming, Death, lest I too forget myself!'[1]

There is no man so blest but that some who stand by his deathbed will hail the occasion with delight. Let him have been virtuous and wise, at the end there will be found one to mutter: 'Are we then at last to be rid of this pedagogue? True, he did no harm; yet I always felt that in his heart he despised us.'—Such is the lot of the truly good. With the rest of us, what an infinity of reasons swells the number of those

[1] 9. 3.

who would fain see us gone! Therefore, when thou comest to die, depart with cheerfulness, pondering thus: 'The life that I leave behind is one in which those fellow creatures for whom I have so often struggled, watched, and prayed are the first to wish me out of the way, hoping, 'tis like, to be quit of a kill-joy.' What then will it profit thee to cling to length of days?

But take heed thou depart not in anger, but as thou hast lived, in all friendship, goodwill, and charity;—not as one who is plucked away by violence; but rather, as one whose body and soul a kindly death painlessly divorces, so do thou quit the things of this life. For Nature joined thee to these and made thee one with them, and now she unties the knot.—And I obey! I go from friends, it is true, but without a struggle and without a qualm. For this act also was ordained by Nature.[1]

How clear it is that there is no other condition of life so well adapted for philosophy as that in which thy lot is cast![2]

The character here revealed is not that of a man of action. Yet this delicate student did his work as emperor well. He was perhaps inclined to be too patient, to trust too much to reason. It is too uncommon a fault to be severely blamed. His greatest error was in the opposite direction—the persecution of the Christians, in whom no doubt he saw only obstinate conscientious objectors, setting an example that undermined the authority of government. But it was true, at least when Gibbon wrote, that if a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous he would without hesitation name the age of the Antonines, when the world 'was governed by absolute power under the guidance of virtue and wisdom'.

How did Marcus manage to shoulder a task so uncongenial, and in the black cloud of adverse circumstance to preserve unfaltering courage and serenity?

He did it by the help of Stoic philosophy. We have the record of the way in which he attuned himself to his uncon-

[1] 10. 36.

[2] 11. 7. The translations throughout this chapter are taken from Mr. John Jackson's brilliant translations of the *Meditations* (Oxford Classical Translations).

genial work in a book which is to pagan religion what Thomas à Kempis is to Christianity. It is known as *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*; but its real title, 'Marcus to himself', renders its character better. It was not written in his study, but jotted down in short disconnected paragraphs day by day on campaign. One chapter ends with the words 'Written on the river Granua [1] among the Quadi'. Part of the book's interest is that in it we hear, across 1,700 years and more, the voice of the emperor as he nerved himself to face the difficulties of every day.

The following extracts show the influences among which Marcus was brought up. The first reveals two second-century philosophers who were among his teachers.

FROM Rusticus I took to heart the great truth that character needs constant correction and cultivation, and was saved from straying into the arid pastures of a contentious sophistry, from scribbling didactic essays and declaiming gratuitous good advice, as well as from essaying the role of the great athlete and man of action. Thanks to him, I learned to hold aloof from rhetoric, minor poetry, and cheap epigrams; to see the absurdity of pacing my palace in gala dress, and similar follies; to write my correspondence in plain Latin—as plain as his in the note he sent my mother from Sinuessa;—to be placable and ready to lay down arms against any one whose offences had stirred me to anger, so soon as he should make overtures for reconciliation; to read accurately, not to rest content with vague general ideas; to be slow in subscribing to a man with a great flow of words; and, finally, through him I first lit on the works of Epictetus, which he lent me out of his private library.

From Apollonius I know that I must strive after ingenuousness, unwavering constancy, and contempt for the gambler's hit or miss; learn, like him, never for an instant to look towards any other guiding star than reason; and, like him, remain unmoved in paroxysms of pain, in the loss of children, and in lingering disease. He was a living proof that the greatest

[1] R. Gran in Hungary.

energy is compatible with the most complete relaxation: his lectures were delivered with unruffled calm, and in him I beheld a man who, in simple truth, looked upon his skill and readiness of exposition as the least meritorious of his qualities. From him I learned in what spirit to receive kindnesses—or what the world deems such—from my friends, neither boorishly ignoring them nor sacrificing my independence in their acknowledgement.[1]

The following passage is a portrait of a good Roman emperor:

FROM the father[2] that adopted me, let me learn to be gentle; to take no decision without careful investigation, but then to hold fast to the anchor of truth; not to be deluded into the pursuit of what men call honour, but to labour and faint not; to lend a ready ear to all who may propound something to the common good; and to reward every man according to his deserts without fear or favour. He knew by experience when there was need of stringency, when of relaxation; he suppressed unnatural vice with a strong hand, and was ever considerate to others. For instance, his friends were left free to accept his invitations or not; there was no constraint on them to accompany him on his visits to the provinces, and those who had stayed behind through one cause or another found, on his return, no change in his feelings towards them. In council he was accurate and persevering in deliberation, nor would he desist from the quest of truth satisfied with plausible commonplaces. To his friends he was constant, neither admitting them with unreasoning effusion nor changing them with each passing whim. Self-reliant and cheerful in all things, he was far-sighted, and nothing was too small for his unostentatious forethought. In his time public and private adulation were alike repressed. He consistently husbanded the resources of his empire and cut down expenses, heedless of disapproval in some quarters. In religion he was

[1] I. 7. [2] The Emperor Antoninus Pius.

free from superstition, in dealing with men he was no popularity-hunter with the democracy or panderer to the mob, but steady and sober in all things, never in bad taste, and no innovator.

The conveniences of life, of which fortune had been lavish to him, he used alike without ostentation and without apology ; if they were present, he enjoyed them unaffectedly ; if absent, he felt no need of them. No one could possibly have described him as a sophist, a licensed jester, or a pedant ; but, rather, as a man, ripe and finished, superior to the arts of flattery, and fit to manage either his own affairs or those of a people. In addition to this he held true philosophers in esteem ; on the spurious sort he wasted no reproaches, but took good care they did not lead him into error. His conversation was familiar and gracious, but never to excess. He took reasonable care of his body, not that he was a great lover of life or cared much for personal adornment, though he did not go to the opposite extreme of neglect ; the result being that his own attention enabled him, for the most part, to dispense with doctors and their drugs and plasters. Most worthy of imitation, also, the unenvious manner in which he would give way to those who had any special faculty—for instance, for oratory, knowledge of law and custom, and the like—giving them his best help in securing the recognition due to their peculiar abilities. Though he observed the traditional institutions of the empire, he showed no affectation of so doing. He had a thorough dislike for chopping and changing, and preferred to stand by the old places and the old things. After suffering agonies through neuralgia, he would return fresh and vigorous to his usual employments. His secrets were few and far between, and the few he had were confined to matters of public policy. He showed prudence and moderation in the exhibition of public shows and the construction of public buildings, as well as in the distribution of state moneys and the like, looking only to what ought to be done, not to the ensuing popularity. He was

not one of those who are at all hours using the baths, nor was he afflicted with the mania for building. No connoisseur of the table, he cared little for the texture or colour of his dress and less for the looks of his slaves. At Lorium he usually wore a toga made at one of his villas on the coast ; a tunic, mostly, at Lanuvium ; in Tusculum he added an overcoat, about which he was rather apologetic, and all his habits were of the same simplicity. There was nothing harsh or intractable or violent about him ; he never rushed around as if the doctor had ordered him to get up a perspiration ;—all seemed to have been reasoned out in detail, deliberately, coolly, methodically, vigorously, and consistently. What was said of Socrates was equally applicable to him, that he could with like ease refrain from and enjoy those pleasures in the indulgence of which, with most men, the flesh is strong enough, in abstinence weak indeed ; whereas to have the strength to bear the latter and maintain sobriety in the former needs a soul perfect and invincible, such as he displayed in the illness of Maximus.[1]

The next extract completes the character of Antoninus, and shows the ideal of kingship which Marcus set before himself.

TAKE heed lest thou become a Caesar indeed ; lest the purple stain thy soul. For such things have been. Then keep thyself simple, good, pure, and serious ; a friend to justice and the fear of God ; kindly, affectionate, and strong to do the right. Reverence Heaven and succour man. Life is short ; and earthly existence yields but one harvest, holiness of character and altruism of action. Be in everything a true disciple of Antoninus. Emulate his constancy in all rational activity, his unvarying equability, his purity, his cheerfulness of countenance, his sweetness, his contempt for notoriety, and his eagerness to come at the root of the matter.

Remember how he would never dismiss any subject until he

[1] 1. 16.

had gained a clear insight into it and grasped it thoroughly; how he bore with the injustice of his detractors and never retorted in kind; how he did nothing in haste, turned a deaf ear to the professional tale-bearers, and showed himself an acute judge of characters and actions, devoid of all reproachfulness, timidity, suspiciousness, and sophistry; how easily he was satisfied,—for instance, with lodging, bed, clothing, food, and servants,—how fond of work and how patient; capable, thanks to his frugal diet, of remaining at his post from morning till night, having apparently subjected even the operations of nature to his will; firm and constant in friendship, tolerant of the most outspoken criticism of his opinions, delighted if any one could make a better suggestion than himself, and, finally, deeply religious without any trace of superstition.

All this do thou imitate, that thy conscience may be as clear as his when thy last hour shall have struck.[1]

The basis of the philosophy of Marcus, as of every Stoic, is that the universe is rational. Yet even if it were not, he is undismayed.

LET thy every action, word, and thought be that of one who is prepared at any moment to quit this life. For, if God exist, to depart from the fellowship of man has no terrors,—for the divine nature is incapable of involving thee in evil. But if He exist not, or, existing, reck not of mankind, what profits it to linger in a godless, soulless universe? But God is, and cares for us and ours. For He has put it wholly in man's power to ensure that he fall not into aught that is evil indeed; and if in the rest of things there had been anything of evil, this too would He have foreseen and enabled us all to avoid.

But how can that which makes not man evil make man's life evil? Universal Nature could not have thus sinned by omission: it is omniscient, and, being omniscient, omnipotent to foresee and correct all errors; nor would it have gone so far astray, whether through lack of power or lack of skill, as to

[1] 6. 30.

allow good and evil to befall the evil and good alike without rhyme or reason.

Rather, life and death, fame and infamy, pain and pleasure, wealth and poverty fall to the lot of both just and unjust because they are neither fair nor foul, neither good nor evil.[1]

Either the universe is an ordered whole or a chaos, confused it may be, but still a whole.—Or thinkest thou that order can reign in the little world within thee, and disorder in the great world without? And this when all things, separate and diffused though they be, are still united in a common sympathy![2]

The universe must be governed either by a foreordained destiny,—an order that none may overstep,—by a merciful Providence, or by a chaos of chance devoid of a ruler. If the theory of an insuperable fate be true, why struggle against it? If Providence watches over all and may be inclined to mercy, render thyself worthy of celestial aid. But if leaderless chaos be all, rest content that in the midst of this storm-swept sea Reason still dwells and rules within thee. And if the tide swirl thee away, let it take thy flesh and spirit, with all the rest; for Reason it cannot take.[3]

If there be a God all is well; if chance governs all see that it govern not thee.[4]

In the universe everything is interdependent.

THE mind of the universe is communistic. Accordingly, it has created the worse to serve the better, and united the better in one common bond. See how it has subordinated and co-ordinated all things, given each and all their deserts, and brought the best into concord with one another![5]

We are all working together for one end; some of us consciously and purposely; others blindly, in much the same way, presumably, as Heraclitus meant, when he said that even dreamers labour and co-operate in all that takes place in the

[1] 2. 11. The last paragraph is explained by the Stoic doctrine of 'indifferent' things (p. 40).

[2] 4. 27. [3] 12. 14. [4] 9. 27. [5] 5. 30.

universe. One man's task lies here ; another's there. Even the grumbler, who is always trying to hinder or undo what happens, incidentally does his share. For the universe has need even of such.—It remains for thee to consider with which class of workmen thou wilt cast in thy lot. The master-craftsman will treat thee well, and receive thee into part of his fellow toilers and coadjutors.[1]

Let me ever be mindful what is the Nature of the universe, and what my own ; how the latter is related to the former, and what part it is of what whole.—And forget not that there is none that can forbid thee to be ever, in deed and word, in harmony with the Nature whereof thou art part.[2]

All that is best for thee, O Universe, is best also for me. Nothing, that comes in thy good time, to me comes early or late. To me, O Nature, all that thy seasons bear is fruit. From thee come all things, in thee they abide, and to thee they return.

The poet cries, 'O city of Cecrops, land beloved'; and canst thou not say, 'O city of God, O land of love'? [3]

Having seen the nature of the Universe we proceed to see the nature of Man.

THIS thing that I call 'myself' is compact of flesh, breath, and reason. Thou art even now in the throes of death ; despise therefore the flesh. It is but a little blood, a few bones, a paltry net woven from nerves and veins and arteries. Consider next thy breath. What a trifle it is ! A little air, and this for ever changing : every minute of every hour we are gasping it forth and sucking it in again !

Only reason is left us. Consider thus : Thou art stricken in years ; then suffer it not to remain a bond-servant ; suffer it not to be puppet-like, hurried hither and thither by impulses that take no thought of thy fellow man ; suffer it not to murmur at destiny in the present or look askance at it in the future.

There are two things common to the soul of God and the

[1] 6. 42. [2] 2. 9. [3] 4. 23.

soul of man and all rational life. The first is that neither can be impeded from without; the second, that to both the Good lies in justice of character and deed, and there all desire ceases.

Live with the gods. For that man lives with them indeed, who, all life long, lays bare his soul to Heaven, showing that it is a soul well content with the dispensations of providence, and executing every wish of that godhead which Zeus has given man, to be his guardian and his guide—a fragment of Himself. And this godhead is the understanding and reason of each one of us.

Learn, late as it is, that thou hast within thee something higher and more divine than the objects that are the causes of passion, and, in general, drag thee puppet-like whither they will.[1]

The following passages expound some principles and methods of the spiritual life. Success in life depends on finding out how Nature means us to live and in living accordingly.

IN the morning, when thou risest sore against thy will, summon up this thought: 'I am rising to do the work of a man. Why then this peevishness, if the way lies open to perform the tasks which I exist to perform, and for whose sake I was brought into the world? Or am I to say I was created for the purpose of lying in blankets and keeping myself warm?'—'At all events, that is the more pleasant theory.'—'So the goal of thy existence is pleasure, and, generally, passivity rather than activity? Look at the tiny plants and birds, at the ants, spiders, and bees: they are all doing their own work, all striving to set their little corner of the universe in order. And thou seest this, and wilt not take up man's burden and run the race that Nature bids thee!'—'But we must have some rest.'—Agreed: but Nature has prescribed limits to that rest, exactly as she has to eating and drinking. Yet these thou art eager enough to overstep; but come to action, and there is no thought of breaking the bounds of the possible!

[1] 2. 2; 5. 34; 5. 27; 12. 19.

The truth is, thou lovest not thyself : else wouldst thou love thy nature with all that she wills. The artist who loves his art throws heart and soul into his work, unwashed and unfed ; but thou hast less reverence for thine own nature than the graver for his graving, the dancer for his dancing, the miser for his hoard, or the notoriety-hunter for his crumbs of glory. Let the master passion once take hold of one of these, and what cares he for food or sleep, or for aught save to perfect his beloved work ? Shall then thy duty as man to man appear in thy sight as a thing of lower caste in whose quest all such zeal is out of place ?

How easy it is to put from us and wipe away every alien, every disturbing thought, and straightway find ourselves in the midst of a great calm !

Make bold to follow Nature in every word and deed, and let not the unreasoning disapproval of others divert thee from thy purpose ; but if this or that ought to be done or said, be true to thyself and do it or say it. For those who sit in judgement on thee are guided by their individual reason and swayed by individual impulse. On these cast no glance, but go straight on thy way, whithersoever thine own and the universal Nature lead : for the path of both is the same.

I walk the way of Nature, till anon I shall fall and be at rest, yielding up my breath to that element from which I draw it day by day, and sinking to the selfsame earth that gave my father his seed, my mother her blood, and my nurse her milk ; that earth that has given me food and drink for many a year, and borne with me while I trampled her under foot and abused her at my will.

Thou hast no shrewdness of wit for men to admire ?—So be it : but much is left thee that admits not the plea ' Nature has given me no aptitude for this '. Then display the qualities that lie wholly within thy power—sincerity, gravity, endurance, indifference to pleasure, resignation to thy lot, contentment with little, kindliness, freedom, simplicity, aversion to inane

chatter, and an unassuming bearing. See how many gifts are within thy reach at any and every moment! In none of these does the excuse of natural incapacity avail; yet thou still fearest to rise! Can natural incapacity compel thee to a grumbling, miserly life of toadyism, to abuse of thy poor body, flattery, ostentation, and perpetual restlessness of soul? Heaven forfend! Say, rather, all this might have been banished long ago. The utmost that 'natural incapacity' can do—if even so much as this—is to earn thee a measure of contempt for slowness of comprehension and a certain hebetude of intellect. And it is thy part to minimize even this by careful training, not to look on dullness either as a thing unworthy serious thought or as a fit object for complacent pride.

It is the nature of some men, when they have behaved especially well to a fellow creature, to sit down and cast up on the spot the debt of gratitude due to them. Others are not quite so premature, yet, in their hearts, look on the *bénéficiaire* as in some sort their debtor, and are perfectly conscious of what they have done. Then comes the man who, so to say, has no conception that he has done anything whatever, but may be compared to the vine that bears her grapes and seeks nothing more when once she has done her work and ripened her fruit.—A man who has done a good deed should be like a horse that has run its race, a dog that has tracked its game, or a bee that has gathered its honey: in other words, he ought not to proclaim it from the house-tops, but go seek an opportunity to do likewise; just as our vine proceeds once more to bear her grapes in the season.

The measure of man's life is a point, substance a perpetual ebb and flow, sense-perception vague and shadowy, the fabric of his whole body corruptible, the soul past searching out, fortune a whirligig, and fame the decision of unreason. In brief, the things of the body are unstable as water; the things of the soul dreams and vapours; life itself a warfare or a sojourning in a strange land. What then shall be our guide and escort?

One thing, and one only—Philosophy. And true Philosophy is to observe the celestial part within us, to keep it inviolate and unscathed, above the power of pain and pleasure, doing nothing at hazard, nothing with falsehood, and nothing with hypocrisy; careless whether another do this or that, or no; accepting every vicissitude and every dispensation as coming from that place which was its own home; and at all times awaiting death with cheerfulness, in the sure knowledge that it is but a dissolution of the elements whereof every life is compound. For if to the elements themselves there is no disaster in that they are for ever changing each to other, how shall we fear the change and dissolution of all? It is in harmony with Nature, and naught that is evil can be in harmony with Nature.

If then thou hast perceived, in truth, where the matter lies, cast away the thought 'What will men think of me?'; and deem it enough if thou shalt live whatever of life be left thee in concord with the will of thy nature. So learn to understand that will of hers, and let naught else distract thee. For experience has shown that in none of thy wanderings hast thou found the good life. It lies neither in logic nor in wealth, neither in fame nor sensual pleasure.—Where then?—In doing what is prescribed by man's nature.—But how shall a man attain this?—Through the possession of principles governing every impulse and action.—And what principles are these?—Those concerned with good and evil, that teach us that nothing is good for man save what makes him just and temperate, brave and free; and that nothing is evil save what effects the reverse of this.

Calmness wherewith to meet all that comes from the cause without thee; justice in every act proceeding from the cause within thee:—that is, impulse and action finding their end in doing the work of the community, as being a law of thy nature.

Let not nausea, vexation, and despair overmaster thee if thou succeed not in conforming each and every action to the canons of Philosophy; but, when one hope has been dashed,

return to the fray, and rest content if but the major part of thy deeds are in line with the nature of man. And hasten as a lover to his love. Turn not to Philosophy as though she were some dreaded pedagogue, but as sore eyes turn to the sponge and egg, or the sick man to his plasters and fomentations. For so obedience to Nature will cost thee no further pang, but thou shalt rest therein and be at peace.

And remember this: the will of Philosophy cannot be in contradiction with the will of thy nature. If it seem so, then say that it was thyself willing what Nature forbids.—'Perhaps; but it is so attractive.'—But is not this merely the favourite fallacy of pleasure? Look and see whether magnanimity, freedom, simplicity, mercy, and holiness possess not greater attractions! Has aught sweeter charms than wisdom, when a man can reflect that, in his understanding and reason alike, complete stability is combined with unimpeded progress? [1]

Happiness is in the reach of those who follow Nature; we can always achieve what she intends for us. When we believe ourselves the victims of misfortune, it is only because we are deceived by our imagination. The remedy is to control it.

NONE can hinder thee from living as thy nature bids: nothing can befall thee, save as the universal Nature wills.

What is the soundest deed or word possible with the materials at thy command? Whatever it be, its performance or utterance rests wholly with thyself, so let us hear nothing of 'impediments in the way'.

Thy duty is to set thy life in order, action by action, and to rest content if they all, so far as may be, accomplish their proper work. Nor does the man live who can prevent this consummation.—'But something external may block the path.'—Nothing can block the path to a just, temperate, and thoughtful character.—'Still, perchance, some other active faculty will suffer impediment.'—But by taking this very impediment in

[1] 5. 1; 2. 17 f.; 8. 1; 9. 31; 5. 9.

good part and passing on contentedly to what is allowed thee, another opportunity for action will straightway arise,—an action that will harmonize with this 'ordered life' which is our theme.

To-day I went out from the midst of trouble; or, rather, I cast out all trouble. For it was not without, but within, amongst my opinions.

Take away opinion, and where is the plaint 'I have been harmed'? Take away this plaint, and where is the harm? [1]

At times facts are too strong for his philosophy.

O MY soul, my soul! wilt thou never attain to goodness and simplicity, oneness and nakedness, and shine through the bars of thy bodily prison? Wilt thou never taste the sweets of a character loving and affectionate? never know satiety and self-sufficiency, with every craving gone and not one lingering desire for aught, quick or dead, that serves the lusts of the flesh; seeking no temporal respite for their longer enjoyment, no pleasant places, no favoured clime, and no congenial society; but content with thy present state, delighted with all about thee, and persuaded that thou holdest all things needful in fee from Heaven, that all is well with thee, and all will be well that God wishes, together with every gift He purposes to bestow for the conservation of that perfect Being, good, just, and beautiful, which gives life and continuance to all things, comprehends them all, and receives them all to itself on their dissolution that it may create others like to them? Say, will thy nature be ever such that thou canst live in communion with God and man, and thou have no word of complaint for them and they no hint of condemnation for thee? [2]

Against such moments of discouragement he reinforces himself in different ways—by concentrating on the task to hand, by withdrawing into himself, by contemplating the

[1] 10. 33; 8. 32; 9. 13; 4. 7. [2] 10. 1.

goodness present in the world, by reminding himself that evil makes opportunities for virtue.

CEASE thy disquisitions on the ideally good man, and become good!

Trouble not thyself by pondering life in its entirety. Strive not to comprehend in one view the nature and number of the burdens that, belike, will fall to thy share. Rather, as each occasion arises in the present put this question to thyself: 'Where lies the unbearable, unendurable part of this task?' Confession will put thee to the blush! Next recall to mind that neither past nor future can weigh thee down, only the present. And the present will shrink to littleness if thou but set it apart, assign it its boundaries, and then ask thy mind if it avail not to bear even this!

Let it be thy hourly care to do stoutly what thy hand findeth to do, as becomes a man and a Roman, with carefulness, unaffected dignity, humanity, freedom, and justice. Free thyself from the obsession of all other thoughts; for free thyself thou wilt, if thou but perform every action as though it were the last of thy life, without light-mindedness, without swerving through force of passion from the dictates of reason, without hypocrisy, without self-love, without chafing at destiny.

Thou seest how few things are needful for man to live a happy and godlike life: for, if he observe these, Heaven will demand no more.

Let not the future trouble thee: thou wilt encounter it, if need be, with the same sword of reason in thy hand that now serves thee against the present.

When thou wilt rejoice thy soul, think of the virtues of thy fellow men;—here energy, there modesty or generosity; here, again, some other noble trait. For there is no keener pleasure than to observe these patterns of the virtues, displayed in the characters of those around us, and exhibited as rankly as possible. Let us therefore keep them ever before our eyes.

Men are continually seeking retreats for themselves, in the

country, or by the sea, or among the hills. And thou thyself art wont to yearn after the like.—Yet all this is the sheerest folly, for it is open to thee every hour to retire into thyself. And where can man find a calmer, more restful haven than in his own soul? Most of all he whose inner state is so ordered that he has only to penetrate thither to find himself in the midst of a great peace—a peace that, to my mind, is synonymous with orderliness.

Therefore betake thee freely to this city of refuge, there to be made new. And cherish within thee a few brief and fundamental principles, such as will suffice, so soon as they recur to thee, to wash away all pain and bid thee depart in peace, repining not at the things whereto thou returnest.—For what is it that vexes thee?—The evil of man's heart?—Call to mind the doctrine that all rational beings exist for the sake each of other, that to bear and forbear is part of justice, and that men's sins are not sins of will. Reflect how many before thee have lived in enmity, suspicion, hatred, and strife, and then been laid out and reduced to ashes.—Think of this and be at rest.—But, perchance, it is the lot assigned thee from the sum of things that troubles thee.—Then recall the dilemma, 'Either Providence or atomic theory,' and all the proofs that went to show that the universe is a constitutional state.—Maybe the ills of the flesh will prick thee somewhat.—Then remember that the mind, when once it has withdrawn itself to itself and realized its own power, has neither part nor lot with the soft and pleasant, or harsh and painful, motions of thy breath; and ponder again the doctrines of pain and pleasure to which thou hast hearkened and assented.—Or, again, thy little meed of glory may cause thee a twinge.—Then look and see how speedily all things fall into oblivion; what a great gulf of infinite time yawns behind thee and before; how empty are the plaudits of men; how fickle and unreasoning are they who feign to praise thee, and within what narrow boundaries that praise is circumscribed. For the whole earth is but a point; and what

a fraction of the whole is this corner where we dwell! Nay, how few even here—and they how insignificant!—will be thy panegyrists.

So much is left thee: forget not to retreat into this little plot of thyself. Above all, let nothing distract thee. Do not strain and struggle, but maintain thy freedom and look things in the face as befits a man and a male, a member of the state, and a mortal creature. And, among the principles which are ever most ready to hand for thee to turn to, let these two find a place: first, that things in themselves have no point of contact with the soul, but are stationed motionless without, while all unrest proceeds solely from the opinion within; second, that all the objects thou now beholdest will anon change and be no more. Think, and think often, how many changes thine own eyes have witnessed, and know that the universe is mutation, and life opinion.

As universal Nature has given every rational being practically all her other powers, so too we are indebted to her for this: that just as she herself converts every obstacle in her path, and every attempt at resistance, to her own ends, assigns them to their proper place in destiny, and makes them part of herself, so each rational being has the power to convert any impediment into material for itself, and to use it for whatever purpose it had in view.[1]

Some Maxims

ALEXANDER of Macedon and his groom are equals now in death. For both have either been received back into the same generative principle of the universe, or dispersed impartially into the atoms.

O the folly of men! They have no word of praise for the fellow creatures who live in their own time and move in their midst. Their one ambition is that they themselves shall be lauded in after ages by men they have never seen, and never

[1] 10. 16; 8. 36; 2. 5; 7. 8; 6. 48; 4. 3; 8. 35.

will see. Would it not be fully as sapient to walk in sorrow because thy forbears did not sing thy praises ?

I have often marvelled how it is that every one loves himself more than the rest of human kind, yet values his own opinion of himself less than that of others. At all events, were some god or some sage to stand by a man and bid him entertain no idea, no thought, within himself without simultaneously uttering it aloud, he could not abide the ordeal for a single day. So true it is that we have more respect for our neighbours and their thoughts of us than we have for ourselves !

Injustice lies as often in omission as commission.

It is enough if thy opinion in the present be based on understanding, thy action in the present directed to the common good, and thy disposition in the present one of contentment with all that befalls thee from the cause without thee.

Wipe away all imagination ; cry halt to impulse ; extinguish desire ; and confirm the mind in its own power.

One man may have no cloak ; another, not a book in the world ; yet both be philosophers. And here is a third that goes half naked, and still he says : ' Bread I have none, yet I hold fast to reason ! '.

Make haste and look into thine own mind, the mind of the universe, and the mind of thy neighbour. Thine own, that thou mayst make it just ; that of the universe, that thou mayst remember whereof thou art part ; that of thy neighbour, that thou mayst learn whether his sin was the sin of ignorance or knowledge, and reflect withal that it is kindred to thine own.

The salvation of life is to contemplate every object in its entirety, and see what it is in essence, what is the formal element in it, and what the material ; and to do the right, and speak the truth, in all sincerity of heart. What then is left, save to enjoy life, adding one good deed to another so that not the briefest interval is left bare of good ?

Be not desultory in action, confused in conversation, or wandering in thought. See that thy soul be not subject to

sudden contraction and as sudden effusion, and let not thy life be one turmoil of business.

Practise even that thou despairest to acquire ; for the left hand, useless as it is for all other purposes through lack of training, still takes a firmer grip of the reins than does the right. For here custom stands it in good stead.

Receive the gifts of fortune without arrogance, and resign them without a pang.

Adapt thyself to the things amidst which thy lot has been cast, and love in sincerity the fellow creatures with whom destiny has ordained thou shalt live.

That which advantages not the hive advantages not the bee.

Dig within thee. There lies the fount of good ; a fount whose waters will for ever well up, if thou but for ever dig ! [1]

To a man in the circumstances and with the temperament of Marcus the chief difficulties of life lay in his relations with his fellow men. Here his practice was Christian, if his reasons were Stoic.

WHEN thy neighbour sins against thee, consider first what is thy relationship to mankind, reflecting that we all exist to serve each other, and that, in especial, thy life-work is to champion thy fellow creatures as the bull defends his herd and the ram his flock. Again, approach the matter from the first principle that, if the atomic theory is false, Nature must be the power that governs the universe ; and, in this case, the worse is created for the good of the better, and the better for the good of one another.

Secondly, call to mind what manner of men these sinners are, at their tables, on their couches, and in the rest of their life. Chief of all, remember the many forms of constraint laid on them by their principles, and the foolish pride with which their very sins inspire them.

Thirdly, reflect that, if these actions of theirs are right, it is

[1] 6. 24 ; 6. 18 ; 12. 4 ; 9. 5 ; 9. 6 ; 9. 7 ; 4. 30 ; 9. 22 ; 12. 29 ; 8. 51 ; 12. 6 ; 8. 33 ; 6. 39 ; 6. 54 ; 7. 59.

no duty of thine to take them amiss ; while if they are wrong it is clear they err through ignorance, not of free will. For as no soul is willingly deprived of truth, so neither is it willingly deprived of the power of treating every one according to his merits. Whence it comes that nothing pricks a man more than to be spoken of as unjust, cruel, avaricious, or, in a word, as a bad neighbour.

Fourthly, bethink thee thou hast vices enough of thine own, and art a sinner with the rest. True, thou holdest aloof from certain errors, yet thy character is prone to fall into them, though cowardice, love of reputation, or some equally despicable motive may save thee from such overt commission.

Fifthly, remember thou hast no sure knowledge that they sin at all. For many acts are merely means to some hidden end, and, in general, much is to learn before one man can pronounce with certainty on the action of another.

Sixthly, when utter vexation and impatience overpower thee, take refuge in the thought that man's life is but for a moment, and anon we shall all be under the sod.

Seventhly, consider that it is not men's actions that trouble us,—for they are situate in the agent's ruling faculty,—but purely our own opinions on them. Then take this judgement of thine that pronounces this or that an object of terror, dare to cast it out, and anger vanishes with it.—' How is this to be done ? ' you ask.—By reflecting that another's sin is not thy dishonour. For, unless dishonour be the sole evil, it is inevitable that thou must commit untold sins and turn robber, or what not, at the same time as thy neighbour.

Eighthly, bear in mind how much harder to endure are the consequences of the anger and grief that ensue on an act than is the act itself which evoked these feelings.

Ninthly, reflect that kindliness is invincible, provided only it be genuine and not the specious grin of hypocrisy. For how can the extremity of insolence touch thee if thou preserve thy goodwill to the sinner, meekly admonishing him as oppor-

tunity offers and quietly pointing out the error of his ways at the very moment he is meditating thy injury? 'Not so, my son; this is not the end for which we were created. True, it will harm me not; but, child, it is harming thee.' And show him with tactfulness and friendliness that the case is so, and that not even the bees or the cattle in their herds act as he does. But set about thy demonstration without trace of irony or rebuke, relying simply on affection and a soul free from rancour. Neither treat him as a pedagogue treats his pupil nor strive to inspire the bystander with admiration of thy magnanimity; but, whether alone with him or in the presence of others, be gentle and unaffected.

Remember these nine rules and guard them as though they were so many gifts from the Muses. Begin even now, while life is still left thee, to be a man. But shun flattery as diligently as thou shunnest anger. Both are detrimental to the community and both lead to harm. And in anger let the thought be ever present that indignation is not a form of courage, but that meekness and gentleness are not only more human but also more manly, and it is he who possesses these that has strength, nerve, and bravery, not the angry and discontented. For, the nearer patience is to dispassionateness, by so much is it nearer strength; and as pain is a characteristic of weakness, so is anger. For their victims have both received their wounds and both succumbed.

And, if thou wilt, receive this tenth gift from the Muses' presiding god. To ask that the wicked shall not sin is an act of madness, inasmuch as it aims at the impossible. But to give them leave to sin against others and demand they shall not sin against thee is not madness, but cruelty and tyranny.

Whatever my neighbour may do or say, it is my duty to remain good; much as were a piece of gold, or an emerald, or a purple robe, to take for its motto: 'Whatever man may say or do, my part is to be myself, and retain my colour.'

If thou canst, show the sinner the error of his ways. If thou

canst not, remember that for these occasions the virtue of kindliness was given thee, and that Heaven itself shows mercy to evil-doers.

It vexes not the gods, though they live for ever, that for all eternity they must needs bear with the wicked, whose wickedness is great, and whose numbers legion. Nay, more than this, they aid them in a thousand ways. Shalt thou, then, whose end is all but here, fall weary of bearing with evil-doers? —And this, too, when thou art numbered with them!

Every morning repeat to thyself: I shall meet with a busybody, an ingrate, and a bully; with treachery, envy, and selfishness. All these vices have fallen to their share because they know not good and evil. But I have contemplated the nature of the good, and seen that it is the beautiful; of evil, and seen that it is deformity; of the sinner, and seen that it is kindred to my own—kindred, not because he shares the same flesh and blood and is sprung from the same seed, but because he partakes of the same reason and the same spark of divinity. How then can any of these harm me? For none can involve me in the shameful save myself. Or how can I be angered with my kith and kin, or cherish hatred towards them?

For we are all created to work together, as the members of one body—feet, hands, and eyelids, or the upper and nether teeth. Whence, to work against each other is contrary to Nature;—but this is the very essence of anger and aversion.[1]

Suffering and Failure

LET the body take thought, if it can, that it suffer nothing; if it fail, let it give voice to its suffering. But the soul itself,—that power which experiences pain and fear, and has sole authority to pass judgement on them,—will feel nothing. It will simply decline to confirm the body's verdict.

To-day I went out from the midst of trouble; or, rather,

[1] 11. 18 f.; 7. 15; 9. 11; 7. 70; 2. 1.

I cast out all trouble. For it was not without, but within, amongst my opinions.

Be as a cliff at whose foot the billows break, and break again ; but it stands firm, and by-and-by the seething waters about it sink to rest.

' Woe is me, that I should have lived to see this day ! ' Nay, say rather, ' Happy am I, that under this stroke I remain of good cheer, uncrushed by the present and unappalled by the future ! '—For such a blow might have fallen on any man, but how few could have sustained it with equanimity ! Why then count the one a disaster rather than hail the other as a blessing? Wilt thou say that human misfortune can consist in aught save deviation from man's nature ? Or thinkest thou that what is in accord with Nature's will can be a deviation from that self-same Nature ? What then ? Thou hast but learned what her will is. And can this mischance rob thee of justice, high-mindedness, temperance, good sense, caution, truthfulness, decency, freedom, and all the rest whose presence it is that enables this nature of man's to come by her own ?

In conclusion, then, remember, if aught chance which tends to drive thee into grief, to apply this principle : ' This thing is no misfortune, but the ability to bear it with fortitude is a blessing indeed.'

Learn to look upon the accomplishment and consummation of whatever seems good to the universal nature in the same light as thine own health ; and accept with cheerfulness all that falls to thy lot, harsh though it may often seem, in the firm conviction that it leads to that great end, the health of the universe and the well-being and felicity of God Himself. And be sure He would lay no burden on any man were it not to serve the purposes of the Whole. For even the nature of the most trivial object ordains nothing, save what shall advantage that little universe over which she holds sway.

Thus two reasons emerge to bid thee rest content with whatsoever may befall thee. Of these the first is, that it was called

into being for thy sake, prescribed for thy good, and had reference to thee from the beginning of things, when it was interwoven with thy destiny among the primeval causes. And the second is, that every visitation of the individual is, to that power which governs the universe, a co-factor in its prosperity and perfection—nay, of its very continuance. For the integrity of the whole is impaired if a man break any link in the unity and coherence of either part or cause. And to murmur at aught that is, and to strive to undo it, is to do all thou canst to sever this chain.[1]

Death

THE man who counts nothing good save that which comes in due season, who recks not whether the sum of his actions according to right reason shall be greater or less, and who cares not a jot whether he has viewed the universe for many years or few, cannot look on death as a thing of terror.

Friend, thou hast been a citizen in this great city ; and what matters it whether for five years or three ? The law is the same for us all. Where is the hardship, then, if it be no tyrant's stroke, no unjust judge, that sends thee into exile, but the same Nature that brought thee hither, even as the master of the show dismisses the mummer that he put on the stage ?—' But my role is unfinished. There are five acts and only the three are gone ! '—Thy words are true ; but in life three acts are all the play. For He decrees it shall end, who was once the author of thy existence, and now of thy dissolution. But thou art guiltless of both. Then depart at peace with all men ; for He who bids thee go is at peace with thee.

But take heed thou depart not in anger, but as thou hast lived, in all friendship, goodwill, and charity ;—not as one who is plucked away by violence ; but rather, as one whose body and soul a kindly death painlessly divorces, so do thou quit the things of this life. For Nature joined thee to these and made thee one with them, and now she unties the knot.—And I

[1] 7. 16 ; 9. 13 ; 4. 49 ; 5. 8.

obey! I go from friends, it is true, but without a struggle and without a qualm. For this act also was ordained by Nature.[1]

Much of this is not our idea of Stoicism. Sometimes it recalls Christianity, sometimes Buddhism. These gentle, melancholy tones are very unlike the brusque, bracing, almost brutal phrases of Epictetus. This is partly due to the fact that the *Meditations* is not a lecture or book on Stoicism. It is a spiritual diary, the musings of a man on the events and trials of every day, jotted down as they came, without an eye to publication and therefore haphazard and disordered. But underneath lie the familiar Stoic principles. Man's duty is to follow Reason. The Universe is the creation of Reason and therefore good. Our task is to accept it, will what it wills, and co-operate with it. Happiness is found by willing the right things. Nothing matters except our will. As long as we remember this, and do not fix our affections on things which we cannot control, we need never know fear or pain or unhappiness. Things are not unpleasant or painful in themselves: they only become unpleasant when we think them so. These are the fundamental doctrines of Stoic morals, and they are the steel framework on which the *Meditations* are built up.

But there is one note in the book which is not Stoic, but comes from the emperor himself. It sounds repeatedly its melancholy leit-motif in the most eloquent and perhaps the most deeply felt passages of the *Meditations*. It is the voice of a nature set to do a task not beyond its powers but against its own desires. We hear it in the following passages.

ALL is the same: in experience, familiar; in time, ephemeral; in matter, sordid; and all in our days is as in the days of those we buried.

Bethink thee, time and again, how many leeches that bent their solemn brows on patients innumerable have followed them to death; how many astrologers that magnanimously foretold the end of others; how many sages that discussed at portentous length mortality and immortality; how many captains that slew their thousands; how many tyrants that breathed terror and insolence and meted out life and death, as

[1] 12. 35 f.; 10. 36.

though exempt from the common lot! Nay, how many entire cities have, so to say, given up the ghost—Helice, Pompeii, Herculaneum, with untold others! Add to the tale all thou thyself hast known, one by one. This man closed his neighbour's eyes, was himself laid low, and another paid him the selfsame tribute—and all within how brief a space! In a word, scan the things of life and know that they are ephemeral and worthless; yesterday an embryo, to-morrow a mummy or a little dust.

Traverse therefore this little moment of time at peace with Nature, and reach thy journey's end in all content, as an olive that ripens and falls, blessing the Nature that bare it and giving thanks to the tree whereon it grew.

Call to mind, say, the times of Vespasian. It is the same old spectacle—marriage and child-bearing, disease and death, war and revelry, commerce and agriculture, toadyism and obstinacy; one man praying that Heaven may be pleased to take so-and-so, another grumbling at his lot, another in love or laying up treasure, others, again, lusting after consulships and kingdoms.

All these have lived their life, and their place knows them no more. So pass on to the reign of Trajan. All again is the same, and that life, too, is no more.

Similarly contemplate all the other great eras of time and nations, and note how many after some supreme effort fell and were resolved into their elements.—Chief of all, recall to mind the multitudes thine own eyes have seen dragged hither and thither in vain emprises, all because they refused to do the work they were formed to do, to hold fast to this, and rest content.—And here it is needful to remember that a law of value and proportion sanctions the amount of attention to be bestowed on every action. For so it will cause thee no qualm, shouldst thou treat the things of lesser moment with no more seriousness than they deserve.

The everyday words of an earlier generation need a glossary now, and similarly the famous names of old—Camillus, Caeso,

Volesus, and Leonnatus—ring strange to a modern ear. Scipio and Cato will soon follow, and in a little while Hadrian and Antoninus will share the same fate. So quickly does human glory fade into the legendary; so quickly is it merged in absolute oblivion.

These instances of mine have been men to whom circumstances have lent a sort of meteoric splendour; as for the rest, let the breath but quit their body and they vanish 'unhonoured and unsung'. And what is this 'undying fame' at the best? A vanity of vanities.

What then is left towards which a man is justified in bending all his energies? Only this; a mind attuned to justice, action devoted to the good of the community, a tongue that knows not falsehood, and a disposition that hails every turn of fortune as necessary, as foreknown, and as proceeding from the same first cause and flowing from the same fount.

Let thy thoughts often dwell on the infinity of men, of infinite professions and infinite nations, who have passed away. On this side, descend from the present time to Philistion, Phoebus, and Origanion; then turn to another ilk. We must remove to that bourne which has received so many great orators, so many high philosophers,—Heraclitus side by side with Pythagoras and Socrates,—so many heroes of old, so many captains and kings thereafter! Eudoxus, Hipparchus, and Archimedes swell the tale, with their kindred spirits, bold, soaring, unwearied, revolutionary, and sublimely confident; scoffers, who, like Menippus and the rest, made this precarious and ephemeral life of man their laughing-stock. Bethink thee, all these have long ago come to dust. But what reck they? Or what reck they whose names perished with them?

In sum, in this life there is but one possession of great price,—to pass thy days with truth and justice, showing kindness to those who know neither truth nor justice.

The pompous ineptitude of a show; stage-plays; flocks and herds; perpetual skirmishes; a little bone thrown to puppies,

or a piece of bread cast into a fish-pond; toiling, burden-bearing ants; frightened mice scurrying hither and thither; marionettes responding to the showman's strings;—such are the things of life. See then that thou stand in their midst, showing kindliness, rather than contempt, to all; but ever mindful that a man's value is that of the objects on which his heart is set.[1]

These are sentiments we know well, the *Vanitas Vanitatum* of the Ecclesiast in Jerusalem, declaiming on the emptiness of life. The pessimism is common: the inference drawn from it is rare. These jeremiads in Marcus end, for the most part, in a positive conclusion which redeems them from cynicism and almost from gloom: for he tells us not merely to be indifferent to transitory happiness and suffering, but to fix our eyes on the only good that is eternal.

The great Stoics are apt to seem remote from us, and inhuman in their austere virtue. It is not so with Marcus Aurelius, who is very human and ordinary. Nature bestowed on him no exceptional qualities except a shrinking sensitiveness very unsuitable for his work. Fortune gave him a position he never desired and duties which he detested. All that he became, he became by his own patient persistence. And perhaps there is no greater evidence of the power of human beings to subdue circumstances to themselves than this clear tranquil voice, rising out of a cloud of solitude and above the din of war.

[1] 9. 14; 4. 48; 4. 32 f.; 6. 47; 7. 3. For a portrait of Marcus by another hand, see p. 233 f.

VI

A PHILOSOPHIC MISSIONARY
DION CHRYSOSTOM

On my shelves rest two thick volumes entitled *The Speeches of Dion Chrysostom*,[1] Dion of the Golden Mouth (A.D. 40—120). They take us back to days before the coming of the Turk when Asia Minor was full of prosperous cities. In one of these —the modern Broussa—about the time when the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch, Dion was born. He followed the family profession of sophist,[2] or lecturer, with success, married, had a child, made enough money to build a factory and a colonnade to his house, and nearly lost his life in a riot of citizens who suspected him of making a corner in wheat. We will begin with two scenes in his career which give very different views of him. The first shows his earlier life. 'I rose at sunrise; I was not well and the air at that hour was rather cold with a touch of autumn in it—though it was midsummer—so I dressed and said my prayers. Then I got into my carriage and pair and took a number of turns on the racecourse quietly and restfully, as one can when driving. After this I took a walk and had a brief rest. Then I had a bath and after a light meal took up some tragedies.' These were three plays on the same subject by the three great Attic dramatists; Dion, like a modern literary man, regrets that he did not hear the original performances of them. The next scene is far from books and comfort—a small Greek settlement near the modern Odessa, which has barely recovered from a recent sack by wild Russian tribes. Enter Dion, a man over forty, no longer in a carriage and pair, but on foot, with the stick and rough cloak of the Cynic philosopher, looking like a beggar.

What has happened to explain this sudden change? Misfortune, and following on misfortune, what we should call conversion. A Roman friend of Dion fell under the displeasure of the emperor, and Dion, then about forty, was involved in his disgrace. The sentence of exile fell, and with no companions but the works of Plato and a speech of the greatest

[1] I have borrowed the title from Dill.

[2] See p. 213.

of Greek orators he left his comfortable home, tramped Greece as a beggar, and reached the outposts of civilization in the wild region of the Crimea. On the emperor's death he returned, but not to his old life. Scanty food, sleepless nights, the heats of summer, winter's cold had been his portion for six years. His old life seemed empty, and turning to philosophy he became a travelling preacher, exhorting men to virtue and preaching the Cynic creed—limit your needs and look for happiness to yourself and not to the multitude of your possessions.

Dion learnt his asceticism from the Cynics, and in his travel years must have been indistinguishable from these beggar friars of the Roman Empire. But it is a Cynicism tempered by literature and common sense, an eclectic creed that drew from Plato and the Stoics as well as from Diogenes, and never lost the mark of the earlier years when he was a prosperous literary man. His works are either dialogues, lectures, or speeches. Those written before his exile are chiefly literary: one of the most interesting is an ingenious essay in higher criticism proving that Troy was never taken and that Homer lies.[1] In his later work he forsakes literature, and preaches a philosophy of life. He sketches the perfect monarch for the benefit of the emperor; he propounds political ideals to Alexandria, Tarsus, Rhodes, and other Greek communities, and rebukes them for the frivolity, the passion for amusement, the riots, the interstate jealousies, that disfigured their civic life. In one place he denounces the Rhodian crowd for honouring eminent men with statues, and on their death transferring the statue to some one else by substituting a new head for the old one. Dion thinks this worse than bad manners; but the practice would save modern towns from some artistic embarrassments. Dion is a preacher rather than a thinker, interesting rather than profound, and in this and other ways resembles Plutarch. The former would have filled worthily a University pulpit, the latter would have been more effective at Westminster or St. Paul's. Plutarch wrote, Dion spoke. Plutarch addressed the educated man; Dion harangued the crowds of the market-place and the festival. Both are practical, idealistic, sincere, earnest. The philosophy of the one was the fruit of reading and cultured leisure: the other learnt his doctrines in the school of poverty and hardship.

[1] The *Troica.*

Plutarch's style is heavy and dull. Dion is fresh, vigorous, and pleasant to read. The two taken together would be almost complete sources for an historical novel of the period. Plutarch reveals the life and ideals of the educated man in European Greece. Dion takes us into the crowded streets, and gives an unsurpassed picture of the political and social life of the Greek communities in the Roman Empire. My extracts show this life on the edge of civilization where barbarism threatens to submerge it, in the country-side, in a provincial town, in a great commercial city, and in a famous centre of religion.

The following passage from an essay of the *Wanderjahre* takes us to a Greek settlement in southern Russia, and gives a glimpse of a Cynic's sermon, and of life and thought in a tiny outpost of civilization.

I HAPPENED one summer to visit Borysthenes,[1] arriving by sea after my exile, and wishing if possible to go through Scythia to reach the Getae and study their life. One forenoon I walked by the banks of the Hypanis, on which the old and the new town are built, a little way above Cape Hippolaus on the opposite shore. This is a sharp and rocky tongue of land like a ship's prow, where the rivers meet. From the Cape to the sea they form a lake of about eleven miles long, as broad as the rivers. Most of it is calm and shallow in fine weather, like the stagnant waters of a lagoon. The river is visible on its right and incoming vessels judge the depth from the current, the strength of which carries the river out of the lake : otherwise the strong south winds that blow at its mouth would have easily barred its progress. The rest of the shore is marshy, thick with reed-beds and woods. A number of trees can be seen in the middle of the lake, and some foreign vessels have missed their course through approaching these in the belief that they were masts.

Owing to frequent wars and captures the size of Borysthenes is far below its ancient reputation. Situated in a foreign land,

[1] Otherwise known as Olbia. It is near the site of the modern Nikolaiev. The Hypanis is the modern river Bug, the Borysthenes the Dnieper.

it has been continually at war and often captured. The last and worst sack of the town was not more than 150 years ago. After this sack the Borysthenites resettled in the town, and the Scythians favoured this, because they needed commerce and Greek traders. For the traders ceased to come after the destruction of the city, finding no one of their own speech to receive them, and the Scythians neither desired nor knew how to make a trading centre of their own after the Greek type.

The insignificance of the city's buildings and the narrow space in which it is confined witness to its destruction. For it is built on a small section of its old wall, in which a few towers are left, inadequate to the size and strength of the city. The interval is closed by an unbroken line of houses, built without intervening intervals.

A very low and weak wall surrounds it, and some of the towers are so far from the part at present inhabited, that no one would suppose them to belong to the same city. Besides these unmistakable signs of its sack, none of the statues in its temples are undamaged: all are defaced, like statues in a graveyard.

Well, I happened, as I said, to be walking outside the city, when some of the Borysthenites came out, after their custom, to greet me. Then Callistratus galloped past me on a horse, riding in from the country, and after going on a short distance dismounted, handed his horse to an attendant, and came up very decorously with his hand under his cloak. He wore a great cavalry sword, and trews, and the rest of the Scythian costume. On his shoulders he had a little, thin, black cloak, in the Borysthenite fashion. He was about 18, very tall and handsome, with a regular Ionian look: and he was said to be a gallant fighter, and to have captured and killed many Sauromatae. He was keenly interested too in literature and philosophy, and actually wished to sail away with me. His qualities, especially his good looks, gave him a great reputation among the citizens. I knew him to be a great admirer of Homer, and I began at

once to question him on this. Almost all the Borysthenites are enthusiastic about Homer, perhaps because they are still a warlike people; or it may be due to their love for Achilles,[1] to whom they pay extraordinary honour. They have built two temples to him, one in what is called the Isle of Achilles, the other in the city. So they want to hear of nothing but Homer. And though their Greek is not perfect, as a result of their settlement in the midst of foreigners, they almost all know the *Iliad* by heart. I said to him in jest: Callistratus, do you think Phocylides[2] or Homer the better poet? He answered laughing: I don't even know the other's name, and I fancy no one here knows it. We don't consider that there is any poet except Homer. And practically every one knows him. For their poets speak only of him in the poems which they compose when they wish to fire their people before battle, and at other times.[3]

Dion then remarks that Phocylides had written some fine things about citizenship, and Callistratus continues:

YOU see all these others who want to hear you and have streamed out to the river-side here for that purpose, though they are not entirely free from care. For you know, I suppose, that the Scythians raided us at noon yesterday, and killed some of the sentinels who were off their guard and perhaps captured others. We don't know yet, for the Scythians have no city, so the pursuit is a long business.—This was quite true, and the gates were shut, and the war signal was exhibited on the wall. Still the people were so fond of lectures and so Greek in character that they were almost all there, under arms, wanting to hear me. I admired their enthusiasm and said: Shall we go somewhere inside the city and sit down? If we walk about, perhaps all will not hear equally well: those behind are inconvenienced, and inconvenience those in front by pressing nearer.—On this they all adjourned to the temple of Zeus, their

[1] The hero of the *Iliad*. [2] An early elegiac poet.
[3] *Or.* 36 (extracts).

usual place for discussion. The senior men, the officials, and the notables sat on the steps: the rest stood: for there was a wide open space in front of the temple. As soon as there was silence, I said that they were right in wishing, as inhabitants of an ancient Greek city, to be addressed about a city. And, first, I said, you must understand clearly what the subject of my address is: for in realizing this you will realize its character. A city is defined as a number of men living in the same place under the governance of law. Obviously the title cannot be applied to the so-called cities which are senseless and lawless. As a being destitute of reason is not a man, so a city is not a city unless it is subject to law. Now an undisciplined and senseless city could never be law-abiding.

And so Dion sails off down a stream of edifying platitudes, where we need not accompany him.

Many of Dion's writings are hardly distinguishable from a modern sermon. But the most delightful of them, though conveying a moral, takes the form of a story. This, perhaps his best work, is on the surface an admirable *genre* painting of life in the town and in the country during the first century A. D. But Dion is still preaching the Cynic doctrine, when he contrasts the countryman with his simple fare, his hospitality, his healthy hard-working life, and the idle populace that has flocked to the town, drawn by the excitements and pleasures of city life and the hope of living at the state's expense, while the country-side is depopulated and the fields remain untilled for lack of labour. The picture has its modern counterpart. But the story can be read for itself. It could not be better told, and the characters are excellently drawn—both the naïve, honest peasant, and, even more, the volatile, superficial, but not ill-natured crowd of a Greek city.

I HAPPENED to cross from Chios with some sailors in a very small boat and during the winter. A storm got up and we had the greatest difficulty in reaching the Hollows of Euboea. Our crew beached the boat on a rough shore under precipices where it was lost, and went off to some dye-fishers [1] who were

[1] The famous purple dye was obtained from shell-fish.

anchoring under the neighbouring headland, with the idea of staying there and working with them. Left to myself and not having any place to take refuge in, I wandered aimlessly by the sea, on the chance of seeing some ship at anchor or sailing near. I had gone some way without seeing a human being, when I came on a deer that had recently fallen from the precipice on to the beach. The waves were breaking on it, but it still breathed. After a little I thought I heard dogs barking on the cliff, but hearing was difficult owing to the noise of the sea. I went on and with great difficulty climbed some high ground, where I saw dogs running to and fro as if they had lost a scent, and I guessed that the deer, pressed by them, had leapt from the cliff. Soon I met a man whom I judged by his look and dress to be a hunter; his cheeks were bright with health, and a striking wealth of hair fell over his shoulders.

The hunter offers Dion hospitality and on the way to his hut talks about his life.

STRANGER, said he, there are two of us, living together. We married each other's sister and have sons and daughters. We live mainly by hunting, but do a little farming. The farm is not our own, either by inheritance or purchase; our fathers were free men but as poor as ourselves. They worked, as herds, for wages, tending the beasts of a rich man down in the city, who owned large flocks of horses and cattle, great herds of sheep, many fine farms, a quantity of other property, and all these mountains. He died and his property was confiscated—they say the prince put him to death for his money. They drove off his herd at once to kill, and with it our few poor cattle, and no one paid us for them. In the past we were compelled to stay here, where we happened to be keeping our animals and had built some huts and a small and flimsy courtyard for the calves, against the summer. In the winter we pastured them in the plains, where we found plenty of grass and a big store of forage. But in summer we drove them

to the mountains. Our parents chose this spot for their fold. For the ground is well drained and there is a deep, shady valley on both sides of it, and a river in it, not rocky, but very easy for cattle to enter. The water is abundant and clear, for its source is near, and in summer there is always a wind blowing through the valley. The neighbouring woods are pleasant and well watered, very free from gadflies and other cattle pests. There are many beautiful meadows shaded by lofty and graceful trees, untouched and full of rich grass throughout the summer, so that the beasts need not wander far. For these reasons it had been their habit to settle their animals here ; and in their altered circumstances they remained in their huts, till they could get employment or work, supporting themselves entirely from the small plot which they had made near the fold. This supplied their needs sufficiently, for it had a quantity of manure. Having no cattle to occupy them, they took to hunting, by themselves or with dogs. For two of the dogs, which had gone off with the cattle, not seeing their masters, after some time left the animals and returned to the spot. At first these dogs went with them, as though for their old employment, and whenever they saw wolves they chased them for a distance, but paid no attention to boars or deer.

He explains how the dogs gradually took to hunting.

WINTER came and our fathers had found no work, even when they went down to the city or the villages. So they fenced their huts more carefully and made the courtyard stronger and laboured all yon piece of ground. In the winter they found hunting easier. The tracks are more visible, for they show on the wet soil, and the snow makes them very conspicuous, so that the hunter has no difficulties. They act as a path leading to the animals, which are more timid at that season and do not run away. One can even catch hares and roe-deer in their haunts. So our fathers stayed on from that time, and never asked for any other life. They married

their daughters each to the other's son. Both died a year or so ago, with many years of life to their count, but still strong, youthful, and fine of body. Of their wives, my mother still lives.

One of us, though fifty, has never visited the city, and I have only been there twice, once as a boy with my father when he kept cattle. Afterwards a man came and demanded money, as if we were well off, and told us to come with him to the city. We had no money and I told him so on oath, saying that we would have given it if we had. We entertained him as well as we could and gave him two deerskins ; and I went with him to the city. For he said that one of us must come and make a statement. Well, I saw, as on my first visit, a number of big houses, enclosed by a strong wall with some high square buildings, the towers : and there were a number of ships anchored in the harbour as quietly as if it had been a lake. We have nothing of the kind on the coast where you landed : and that is why ships are destroyed here. I saw this, and a great crowd packed together, and heard an unspeakable noise and clamour : indeed, I fancied that they were fighting each other. My guide brought me to some officials and said with a laugh, ' This is the man you sent me for. But he has nothing except his hair and a stout log-hut.' The officials went to the theatre and I with them. For some time the crowd occupied itself with other matters, sometimes shouting applause in a good-natured and cheerful way, sometimes making very angry demonstrations. And their anger was formidable. The men they shouted against became at once dismayed, and some ran round imploring mercy, while others threw off their cloaks in fear. As for myself I nearly collapsed on the spot at the shouting : it was like a sudden peal of thunder or a wave breaking. Then other individuals spoke to the crowd—some got up in the middle of it—briefly or at great length. Some were listened to for a long time : at others the crowd showed displeasure the moment they spoke, and would not let them utter a word. When they

had sat down and quiet was restored they led me forward, and one said, ' This is one of the men who have been occupying the nation's land—he and his father before him—pasturing on our hills, tilling, hunting, building great houses, planting vines and enjoying many other blessings, though he has neither paid for the land nor been presented with it by the people. What could they have done for it? They occupy our property and grow rich on it, but they have done the city no service, and pay no share of the produce, but spend their lives in enjoyment of these immunities as if they were national benefactors. I suppose ', he said, ' that none of them have ever even come here.' I nodded: and the crowd, seeing me nod, laughed. This annoyed the speaker and he abused me, and said, ' If that is so, why should not we all see who can be first to rob the state, stealing its money, as some to-day are actually doing, or dividing up its land? Why not, if you are going to allow these beasts to have for nothing more than 1,000 acres of your best land, that might yield you three quarts of corn per head? ' At this I laughed as loudly as I could. But the crowd, instead of laughing as before, made a noise: and the speaker grew angry, and with a savage look at me said: ' Do you see the scoundrel's insolent evasion, and the impudent way in which he ridicules you? Another minute and I will arrest him and his partner. For I am told that there are two ringleaders in the gang which have seized practically all the mountain district. And I have no doubt that they have their hands in the wrecks that occur, for they live close over the Capherean rocks.[1] How else would they have got these valuable farms, whole villages indeed, and all their flocks and horses and slaves? Perhaps you notice his poor smock, and the skin which he put on when he came here, to deceive you into supposing him poor. It frightens me to look at him. I expect he lights fires on the headland, in order to shipwreck passing vessels.' He made a long speech in

[1] Famous for their danger to ships.

this vein and the crowd got angry: and I was at my wits' ends, and was afraid that they might do me some injury.'

Another speaker then rose on the opposite side. Pointing out the depopulation of Greece and mentioning his own difficulty in getting labour and the tendency to desert the country for a city life, he argues that men like the countryman are doing a real service to the state and should be encouraged.

FINALLY they told me to speak. 'What shall I say?' I said. 'Answer what has been said,' shouted a man in the audience. 'Well,' I replied, 'it is all false. I thought that I must have been dreaming when the speaker talked about farms and villages and all that nonsense. We have no village, horses, asses, or oxen. I wish we had all the fine things he talked about, to give you some and to be well off ourselves. But what we have is enough. Take what you like of it; and if you take all, we will get some more.' They applauded this, and the president asked me what we could give the state. 'Four very fine deerskins,' I said. The crowd laughed and the president was annoyed. 'The bearskins,' I continued, 'are rough, and the goatskins are worth less, and the rest are old and some small. But, if you wish, take them.' He was still vexed and said that I was a regular country bumpkin. Then I went on: 'You talk of farms? I tell you we have none.' He asked me: 'Will you each pay an Attic talent?'[1] 'We don't weigh our meat,' I said. 'But what we have is yours. There is a little salted, and the rest smoke-dried, but almost as good, some hams, and venison, and some other fine meat.'

Then they shouted that I was lying. Some one cried, 'Don't you make wine?' 'We do, and will give it to any one who comes. But bring a wineskin, for we have none.' 'How many vines have you?' 'Two in front of the gate, and twenty in the yard. But to save you from the trouble of questioning me on each point I will tell you the rest of our possessions:

[1] £240: but the word 'talent' is also a weight: and the rustic, having no experience of large sums of money, misunderstands.

eight she-goats, an unhorned cow with a very fine calf, four sickles, four hoes, three spears, and a dagger apiece against wild animals. Our pottery is not worth mentioning. We have our wives and children, and we live in two fine huts : our corn and skins are in a third.' ' Yes,' said the orator, ' and perhaps that is where you bury your gold.' ' Come and dig it up then, fool,' I replied. ' Who buries gold ? It is not a plant.' Then they all laughed—at him, I thought. ' That is what we have. You can have it all freely, if you wish : you need not use force to take anything ; we are not strangers or bad people. We are citizens, so my father told me, and we are bringing up our children to be your fellow citizens.'

The countryman ends his story by describing how he was recognized by one of the audience, whom he had rescued from shipwreck. This man describes how he was wrecked.

'OUR ship was completely lost on the Capherean rocks and only a few escaped. One or two were taken in by the dye-fishers : for some happened to have money in their purses. But we, getting to shore absolutely naked, followed a path in the hope of finding a shepherd's or cowherd's shelter, almost dead of hunger and thirst. With difficulty we made our way to some huts, where we stood and shouted, till this countryman came and took us in and lit a fire. He rubbed one of us with dripping, and his wife the other—they had no oil,—and afterwards poured hot water over us, till they revived our frozen bodies. Then they sat us at table and, wrapping us in what they had, put wheaten loaves before us, while they ate millet porridge. They gave us wine, drinking water themselves, and an abundant meal of boiled and roast venison. The next day we wished to go, but they kept us for three days, and then took us on our way to the plain, giving us on our departure meat and a fine skin apiece. My host saw that I was still in a poor condition after my terrible experience and gave me a shirt : it was his daughter's and she put on some rag in its place.'

The crowd listened with pleasure to his speech and began to praise me. And I remembered him and said, ' How are you, Sotades ? ' So I went to him and kissed him and his friend. The crowd laughed loudly at this. Then I realized that in cities they do not kiss each other.

The previous champion of the countryman now comes forward and urges that he be suitably rewarded and given clothes, money, and a public dinner.

HIS proposal was accepted, and followed. The clothes and the money were brought on the spot into the theatre. I did not want to take them, but they said that I could not dine in a dress of skins. ' Then,' said I, ' to-day I will go without my dinner.' However they dressed me in the shirt and threw the cloak over me. I wanted to put my deerskin over that, but they would not allow it. But I absolutely declined the money, and swore that I would not receive it. ' If you want ', I said, ' some one to take it, give it to the orator,[1] so that he can bury it. Obviously he knows how.' And thenceforward no one interfered with us.

As he finished his story we found ourselves at his hut : and I said with a smile, ' There was one thing you concealed from the townsfolk, your finest possession.' ' What is that ? ' he asked. ' This fine garden with all its vegetables and trees.' ' It was not in existence at the time,' he answered : ' we made it later.' We entered the house and made merry for the rest of the day, reclining ourselves on a high couch of leaves and skins, while the wife sat near her husband. A grown-up daughter waited and served us with black, sweet wine. The boys got the meat ready and ate with us after serving it, so that I congratulated the family, and thought to myself that I knew no one who lived so happily. Yet I was familiar with the houses and tables of the wealthy, kings and governors as well as private persons. I used to think the rich unhappy, and I thought them still more so then, seeing how poor and how free

[1] See p. 117.

were my hosts, and that they did not miss the full pleasure even of food and drink, and indeed were abundantly provided. We were very comfortable, when my friend's fellow arrived, with his son, a fine youth, who carried a hare. He blushed on entering, and while his father was greeting us he kissed the girl and gave her the hare. The girl stopped serving and sat down by her mother, the youth taking her place. I asked the stranger: 'Is this the girl you mentioned?' 'No,' he said. 'That one married a rich man in the village long ago, and has big children.' 'Do not they provide you with what you want?' I asked. 'We want nothing,' the woman answered, 'but we give them fruit and vegetables and game: for they have no garden. We had some wheat from them last year, for use as seed, and paid them back that summer.' 'Well,' I said, 'are you going to marry this girl to a rich man, so that she too can lend you corn?' But at this both the girl and the youth blushed, and her father said: 'She will take a poor man, a hunter like ourselves;' and he looked at the youth with a smile. 'Why,' said I, 'do you not bestow her? Or has the suitor to come from the village?' 'I fancy,' he answered, 'that he is not far off, but in the house, and we shall choose a good day and have the wedding.' 'And how,' said I, 'do you decide what is a good day?' 'When the moon is big,' he replied; 'it must be clear, bright weather.' 'I suppose,' I said, 'he is really a good hunter.' 'Yes,' replied the young man, 'I can wear down a deer and face a boar. You shall see to-morrow, stranger, if you like.' 'And did you catch this hare yourself?' 'I did,' he replied with a smile, 'with a snare at night: for it was beautifully fine, and the moon bigger than it has ever been before.' At that we both laughed, the girl's father and the boy's. And he was ashamed and held his tongue.

But a problem arises. Where is a victim for the religious sacrifice necessary on marriage? At this the younger brother of the girl mentions that he has a wild boar, which he caught. The young men go to fetch it.

THE girl then rose and brought from another hut sliced service-berries, medlars, winter apples, and bursting grapes from a noble vine and placed them on the table, putting a fresh frond of fern beneath. Soon the youths came driving the pig with merriment and laughter, and with them came the bridegroom's mother and two young brothers. They brought fresh bread, a dish of eggs on wooden platters, and baked beans. The woman kissed her brother and niece, and sat down by her husband, saying : ' There is the victim which he has long been feeding for the marriage, and the wheat-flour and barley-meal are prepared. The only thing we want perhaps is a little wine, and that we can easily get in the village.' Her son had taken his stand near her, looking at his uncle, who said with a smile, ' There 's the fellow who is delaying us. Perhaps he wants to fatten the pig still more.' The youth said, ' She will burst with fat ; ' and I, to help him, went on, ' Take care or the bridegroom will grow thin, while the pig is being fattened.' ' The stranger is right,' said his mother ; ' he is already thinner than his usual self ; and the other day I noticed that he woke in the night and went out of the hut.' ' The dogs ', he broke in, ' were barking, and I went out to have a look.' ' No,' said she, ' you were walking up and down, out of your senses. Don't let him distress himself any longer.' And she threw her arms round the girl's mother and kissed her, who said to her husband : ' Let us do what they wish.' It was decided, and they fixed the wedding for the third day, and invited me to wait for it. I did so with pleasure, reflecting on the lives of the rich and their marriages, the matchmaking, the inquiries into property and pedigree, the marriage portions and dowries and promises and deceptions, the agreements and settlements, and finally the hard words and hatreds that often arise in the marriage itself. I have recounted this story not idly, nor, as some may perhaps think, for talking's sake. I wished to put before the eyes of any who care to see it an example, from my personal knowledge, of the life and existence

of the poor, their words, acts, and family relations, to see if because of their poverty they are worse equipped than the rich for a natural and noble existence, if indeed on the whole they are not better off.

The essay concludes with unfavourable remarks on the city life and on the rich.

The following extract shows us Alexandria in the early years of the second century of our era:

IN size and site, men of Alexandria, your city is eminent, and unmistakeably takes second place of all beneath the sun. The great Egyptian nation is its body, or rather an appendage to it. You have a river, unique in character, equally wonderful and useful, and, compared with all other rivers, great beyond words. With your noble harbours, with your great fleet, with the abundance and disposition of your universal wealth, you are masters of all the Mediterranean, and possessors of the upper seas beyond, the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, names once barely known. So you possess the commerce not of island or harbour, of strait or isthmus, but practically of all the world. For Alexandria's site knits together the world and its most distant nations: it is like the market-place of a single city, collecting all men to a single point, introducing them to each other, and, so far as may be, making them one people. Perhaps you like hearing me say this, and fancy that I am praising you, like the rest of your flatterers. But it was the sea and land, your harbours and site, that I praised rather than you. Have I said that you were wise and reasonable and just? Or the opposite? The glory of men resides in discipline, gentleness, concord, in an ordered state, that listens to good counsellors and is not always hunting for pleasure. Ships arriving and departing, a great population, great commerce, great fleets, are to the credit of a fair, a harbour, a market, not of a city.[1] But you are elated if one praises the Nile, as if you yourselves flowed from central Africa.

[1] To a Greek a city is a community, not a place or a collection of buildings.

Dion then criticizes the scenes in the theatre and racecourse.

WHEN your people are at a religious service or walking by themselves they are moderate enough. But let them once enter a racecourse or theatre, and it is as if they had found some poison buried there; they forget their former selves and are not ashamed to say or do whatever enters their heads. In their passion for the spectacle they cease to see, in their longing to hear their ears are shut: they are plainly mad and beside themselves, women and children no less than men. I can imagine that one of your visitors from Persia or Turkestan may say that they themselves know how to ride and are unrivalled horsemen; for they do it to keep their freedom and their empire: and yet they never behaved in this way. Whereas you who have never touched or mounted a horse cannot control yourselves, but are like lame men quarrelling about a foot-race.[1] . . . You hit each other, you shout, you throw yourselves about, you dance. What is the poison with which you have anointed yourselves? It must be the poison of folly: for you cannot behave as reasonable spectators. Do not suppose that I am urging that there should not be such spectacles in cities. They are necessary perhaps and inevitable owing to the weakness and idleness of the masses; and perhaps among the better sort there are those who need some amusement and relaxation in their life. But they should be conducted in an orderly way and as befits free men. It will not make any of the horses run more slowly or any of the singers sing less well, if you behave. As it is you think it a terrible disaster if a driver falls from his car; but you do not mind your own dignity and proper decency taking a fall. If a singer sings a false note and out of tune you hear it; but you do not mind yourselves breaking the harmony of nature and being completely out of tune.

In the following description of Alexandrian music we seem to be listening to a modern critic of the jazz.

[1] The same criticism may be made on a Cup Tie crowd.

NONE of your musicians is an Orpheus or an Amphion.[1] For Orpheus was the son of a Muse, while they are the children of disharmony, who break and mutilate the dignity of melody, and in every way outrage the music of old. Which of them is capable of a perfect song, a noble rhythm ? Like bad and meddling cooks they have made a hash of effeminate chants, ballet measures, and intoxicated trills. It is not nightingales or swans that suggested the name which you yourselves have given to their style. You compare it to the whining and barking of dogs. Orpheus tamed wild animals and made them harmonious by his singing : your singers have made you, who are human beings, savage and uncultured.

Dion then refers to a riot at Alexandria, in which the natives had shown an ignominious cowardice.

I HAVE referred to this because I wished you to know the fruits of this indiscipline of life. Men who are excited over trifling and worthless things, whose everyday life is mean and vicious, cannot be reasonable in other matters or right in their deliberations on greater issues. Frivolity and thoughtlessness of character will not stop at trifles, nor has folly a limit to its errors ; it spreads over the whole of life alike and lays its hands on everything with equal licence. Do not think that it is a question of trifles, when some one speaks to you about the uproar in your theatres. Penury does not come so quickly through a succession of small losses, as evil advances from these minor offences and leads to its final and full-grown end in destruction.

Enough of the theatre. When you enter the racecourse, the screaming, the confusion, the excitement, the changes of colour and attitude, the many and various forms of profanity, beggar description. If it had not been a race between horses, a familiar spectacle, that you had been watching ; if you your-

[1] Legendary masters of music.

selves were being flogged with the scourges of which tragic poets tell, you would not have been so excited.

It is shameful, Alexandrians, that visitors to your city should hear of the wonders of all else about it, but hear nothing dignified or admirable about yourselves ; that on the contrary you should be held up to ignominy as worthless, as actors and buffoons rather than strong men. It is like seeing a fine mansion, where the owner is a slave unworthy to be its porter. Troy was not blessed, for its citizens were vicious and base : yet it was a great and famous town. None the less its broad acres were wasted by the citizen [1] of the small and obscure island of Ithaca. I am afraid that you may be ruined as Troy was—I must apologize for a poor joke. Troy too was destroyed by a horse.[2] They were captured by one horse, you by many. For cities are not only taken when men demolish their walls, kill the men, enslave the women, and burn their houses. When there is indifference to all that is noble, and a passion for one ignoble end ; when men devote themselves and their time to it, dancing, mad, hitting each other, using unspeakable language, often blaspheming, gambling their possessions and sometimes returning in beggary from the spectacle —that is the disgraceful and ignominous sack of a town.[3]

Mutatis mutandis, this denunciation has its modern application, for urban civilizations tend in all ages to the same vices. These were however worse among the subjects of Rome ; for big political issues had been removed from their control and little was left to them except petty squabbles and a passion for amusement. The spectacle of these Greek states is an argument for our British theory, however difficult and halting, of a self-governing empire. It is the more interesting to see what ideals were still left to a world that had lost its independence. The following extract, taken from a speech to his own townsmen, shows Dion's view :

[1] Odysseus.

[2] The wooden horse in which the Greeks lay ambushed. The ' joke ' is the allusion to the Alexandrian horse-races.

[3] *Or.* 32 (extracts).

WHEN a man belongs to a country so good, so full of goodwill, should he not prize her above all else? With this thought I feel happy, as I look at my own son and my nephew and the rest of our youth. And—thanks to God—I see many of them, all sons of good parents, and looking good themselves; minded to compete without envious or jealous feelings with each other and with their fellow men for the splendour and renown of their country and themselves, each trying to be the first of her citizens in justice, in patriotism, in the power to do something for her and make her greater. I see that philosophy as well as eloquence makes men great and remarkable, and in their own interests I shall not hesitate in private, and, when opportunity offers, in public, to encourage the young. As for what the Romans can do for us, I advise you to expect things [1] to remain as they are, and to limit your hopes to distinctions or honour or financial benefits. But there are things which you can do for yourselves, and I urge you to show your superiority to other peoples in orderly behaviour, honourable conduct, industry, obedience to good advisers and moderation in your daily life, neglecting neither body nor soul as far as each man's business gives him leisure, willingly bringing up and educating children, making our city peaceable and steady and really Greek, directing its intelligence and its natural vigour and keenness to higher and nobler things, refraining as far as possible from every dissension, disturbance, and collision with each other.

For there is such a thing as the culture of a people, and a reasonable and philosophic character in a state. Spartans and Athenians and others succeeded in the past in turning very small and feeble states into great and famous ones by ordered political life: modern peoples who wish it may achieve as much. If you do this, it will help you more than large parliaments, self-government, subsidies from outside, and even inde-

[1] He means that there is no use expecting political independence from Rome.

pendence, if you could ever win it. You know well that so-called independence, the title that our rulers and masters [1] bestow, sometimes cannot be won. But each individual and city can give itself the real independence, which men actually enjoy, by managing their lives with nobility and without disorder or want of dignity.[2]

Dion preached to the mistress of the world as well as to her subjects. The difference in his message to the two shows that Roman materialism, if as deep, was less frivolous and pleasure-seeking. About the same time a Jew was giving his view of the imperial city. While Dion like a true Greek reasons with Rome, the writer of the eighteenth chapter of *Revelation* denounces her. But the substance of their message is the same, and it is not only to the ancient world that their preaching applies.

I TRIED to talk in this way to the Romans when they invited me to speak, not taking them apart by twos and threes in the gymnasia and colonnades—for in Rome one could not hold discussions of this type—but in large and crowded meetings. I said that they needed a better and more thorough culture if they were to be happy, not in the eyes of the crowd as at present but in reality and truth. Some one should teach and persuade them that there is no value in the things on which they spend themselves, and to the acquisition of which they devote all their efforts, thinking that the more they get the better and happier their life will be. Instead they should practise and enthrone in their souls reasonableness and courage and justice : they should concentrate on finding instructors in the virtues, Greeks or Romans, or Indians or Scythians (if these peoples have men who can teach virtue, as shooting or riding are taught), some one who can heal the soul's diseases, as doctors know how to heal those of the body, and set free the victims of vice and greed and similar infirmities. They should get hold of such a man and bring him along, and persuade him by the appeal of argument or friendship : for a good man of

[1] i. e. Rome.

[2] *Or.* 44 *fin.*

this type cannot be persuaded by money or other gifts. They should place him in the heart of their city, and make a law that all young men should attend his teaching—and old men too—till all become wise and fall in love with justice, and despise gold, silver, ivory, food, scent, and sensual pleasures, living in happiness and becoming rulers first of themselves and then of all other men. For then, I said, your city will be great and strong and truly imperial; to-day its greatness is questionable and not very secure. For, said I, the more courage, justice, and reasonableness you have, the less will be your gold and silver, your ivory furniture, your amber, crystal, citrus, ebony, your women's ornaments, embroideries, and coloured stuffs, and all the costly and prized possessions of Rome. You will need less of them, and when you have reached the heights of virtue you will need nothing. You will have smaller and better houses and fewer idle and useless slaves.[1]

There is another side to Rome than this. Nothing is more remarkable in the Roman Empire than the enthusiasm which it aroused among subjects who in the past had a tradition of freedom: and Dion is among its admirers. The following extracts from an address to the Emperor Trajan give a provincial's view of the imperial regime, and, incidentally, a political philosophy of absolutism. No doubt the picture is idealized; but facts allowed it to be painted.

I HAVE been, noble emperor, your companion, and no one perhaps knows your disposition better, how you love frankness and truth better than flattery and deceit, how you suspect the pleasures of our lower nature, and endure toil, which you regard as a test of virtue. And when I see you I declare that you are really blessed, who have a power second only to God's, and who use it nobly. When a man might enjoy every pleasure, be exempt from every hardship and live in the completest ease, doing what he likes not merely without hindrance but with general approval; when such a man proves a judge

[1] *Or.* 13 *fin.*

more law-abiding than the regular juror, a prince more equitable than the officials of the civil service, a general more just than the soldiers in his army ; when he is more laborious in all his work than those who are compelled to labour, less anxious for luxury than those who can never enjoy it, more benevolent to his subjects than a loving father, more terrible to his enemies than an unconquered and invincible god ; would you not call his genius a blessing not merely to himself but to the world ? When multitudes of cities obey a man, when thousands of peoples are guided by his judgement, when countless tribes who live in isolation from each other look to his wisdom alone, he is the saviour and guardian of mankind if his character is as I have described it.

Such a prince regards goodness as a noble possession for others, but as indispensable for himself. For who needs more wisdom than he who must deliberate on the greatest issues ? Who needs more unerring justice than one who stands above the laws, or stricter self-control than one to whom everything is allowed, or stouter courage than the preserver of the world ? Who delights more in the works of virtue than one who has mankind as spectators and witnesses of his soul ? None of his actions can be hidden any more than the sun can walk in darkness ; for in bringing all else to light he reveals himself first of all.

Dion then points out that mere power is not greatness.

IF a ruler watches in a judicious, benevolent, and law-abiding spirit over the security and the well-being of his subjects, happy himself and sharing his happiness with them, not divorcing his interests from those of his people, but most pleased and most persuaded of his own prosperity when he sees his subjects prosperous, then he is supreme in power and a real monarch. But if he is a lover of pleasure and wealth, tyrannical and lawless, living an idle and indolent life, regarding his subjects as slaves and ministers to his luxury, devoid

of the temper of the good shepherd, I should not call him a king or emperor or prince ; I should call him a tyrant.

Dion points out that there are three forms of government—monarchy, ' when a city, or several nations, or mankind are governed by the goodness and judgement of one good man ', aristocracy, and democracy (' a name of equity and gentleness, if it be practicable '). He continues :

I WISH to deal more thoroughly with the happy and divine system at present prevailing. There are many illustrations and instances of this type of government, plain to see, for nature exhibits in herds and hives the natural rule and providential power of the greater over the less. But there could be no plainer or more beautiful instance than the government of the universe, which is ordered under the first and most excellent God. A ruler of this type is primarily a lover of God, for the gods have given him the greatest honour and trust. First and foremost he will worship God, not with lip-service, but in the conviction that gods exist, in order that he too may have worthy governors. He thinks that his own providential power benefits men, as the gods' governance benefits himself. Knowing that he himself will never take a gift from wicked men he thinks that the gods do not enjoy the offerings and sacrifices of ill-doers, but only accept the offerings of the good. He will be eager to worship them abundantly with these ; and he will never cease to honour them with that other offering of noble deeds and just acts. In his eyes goodness is religion, and all wickedness irreligion ; and not only the sacrilegious and the blasphemous are guilty and accursed, but still more the coward, the unjust, the intemperate, the foolish, and, in fine, all whose acts are opposed to the power and will of God. He does not regard the care of mankind as a secondary interest or a mere occupation : it seems to him his own task and trade. None of his other occupations seems to him serious or part of his real business. But when he is doing good to men he thinks

that he is fulfilling the mission assigned to him by the Supreme Deity, whose orders may never be resented or disobeyed.

He sees that in everything God has ordained the better to govern and take thought for the inferior: thus He has made skill plan and provide for unskilfulness, power for weakness, wisdom for folly. In all these tasks the ruler's duty is not light but laborious, and full not of ease and leisure but of toil and care. The passengers in a ship can be indifferent: they need not even see the sea or have an idea where they are. In calm weather many do travel in this way, playing draughts, singing or eating all day long: when a storm comes they wrap themselves up and wait for the issue; some go to sleep and do not get up till they are in port. But the pilot must watch the sea, keep his eye on the sky, look out for land. He must not forget even the undersea world, or he will find himself on some submerged rock or hidden reef. He alone at night can take less sleep than a swimmer. If he steals a few moments of slumber by day his rest is uncertain and in suspense, for he must often call for the sail to be set or the helm put over. So even in his sleep he watches over the ship more than the most wakeful of its other inmates.[1]

The Olympic speech from which the following extracts are taken was delivered at the great assembly of the Olympic games, perhaps in A. D. 105, when Trajan was on the Danube at the second Dacian war. It is a Greek sermon. Phidias' famous statue of Zeus at Olympia suggested a subject—the justification of portraying God in human form, and the religious value of such portraits. Incidentally Dion expounds his view of the nature of God and of our knowledge of Him. The speech has been called 'one of the most important records of the history of ancient religion'. It is certainly full of genuine feeling.

I HAPPEN to have just made a long journey, as far as the Danube and the land of the Getae. I did not go as a trader or on army service as a bearer or driver. I had no mission

[1] *Or.* 3. Has absolutism ever had a nobler panegyric? For other allusions to the imperial ideal, see pp. 80 f., 148 f., 255 f.

to treat of alliances. I was

Unarmed, without helmet or shield or spear

or indeed any other weapon. Everywhere one saw swords, cuirasses, pikes : everywhere one saw horses and armed men. Alone I appeared in this crowd, a quite idle and very peaceful spectator of war, physically feeble, advanced in years, just wishing to see men fighting on the one side for empire and power, on the other for freedom and their country.[1] Then I returned to you ; not that I shrunk from danger—do not think it—but that I remembered an old vow ; and I always regard religion as more important and urgent than human affairs, however great they are. Would you think it more suitable and agreeable if I spoke of what I saw there, the size of the river, the character of the country, the variations of the seasons, the nature of the inhabitants, their numbers and equipment ? Or should I rather deal with the greater and more important question of the God at whose shrine we are ? For he is the universal king, ruler, chief, and sire of men and gods, the dispenser too of peace and war, as the wise and experienced poets of the past thought.

Are we, who have met here, merely to be spectators of the other famous and beautiful sights here, especially the worship of Zeus and his truly blessed statue, which your ancestors offered here, the most beautiful of all statues on earth, the dearest to God ? Or shall we ponder more deeply on the poems and works of art of which I have spoken, and on any other such agency which gives form and shape to human thought about God ?

About the general nature of the gods, and especially of the Ruler of all, first and foremost there exists an opinion and conception shared by the whole human race, Greek and non-Greek, a conception necessary and naturally innate in every reasonable being. This conception needs no human teacher or hierophant : it does not lie : it proceeds from our kinship with God

[1] Note this very modern sympathy with the enemy.

and the many evidences of the truth, that do not permit even the eldest and oldest to close their eyes and ignore them. For men have not been planted by themselves remote from Divinity: grown up in its very midst, nay, grown into it and clinging to it, they could not long remain without understanding, especially as they have received reason and understanding from God. For they are illumined everywhere by the great divine visions of heaven, the stars, the sun, and moon; by night and day they meet with their many and varied forms, they see marvellous sights, and hear the manifold voices of wind and forest, river and sea, of wild and tame animals. They themselves use an utterance most delectable and clear, love the majesty and ingenuity of the human voice, assign symbols to the objects which they perceive, so as to name and indicate all their conceptions, and inherit easily memories and ideas of unnumbered things. How then could they, fulfilled as they are on every side with the Divine nature through eye and ear and every sense, remain ignorant and have no conception of Him that sowed and planted, that preserves and feeds? They dwell on earth, they see the light in heaven, they have food unlimited from the plenty and providing of their ancestor God. The first men, children of the soil, while the slime was still soft and rich, fed on the earth, licking up their food as from a mother—as plants to-day drain the earth's moisture. Succeeding generations fed on self-grown crops and tender herbage, with sweet dew and fresh fountains of the Nymphs, supported by the embracing atmosphere and nurtured on an unfailing flux of air. They drank of the moist aether, like infants, and its milk never failed them, for its breast was always at their lips. . . . With this experience, when they reflected, they could not but admire and love the Divine, perceiving too how the seasons exist for our well-being with their exact precision, their avoidance of excess or defect, and possessing by God's gift this superiority over all other living things, that they could reason and think about them. It is as though a Greek or foreigner were to be brought

for initiation [1] into some sacred building of superhuman size and beauty, to see many mystic sights and hear mystic sounds with a succession of visions of light and darkness and a thousand other circumstances, and with the rites of the so-called 'enthronement', when the officiating priests dance round the seated novice. Is it likely that such a one would have no spiritual emotions, no suspicion that this happened by intelligent preparation and design, even if he were some remote and obscure prince, without any one to interpret and expound? His human soul itself would teach him. And if this be so, would it be possible for nothing to be perceived or suspected, when the whole human race is initiated into the complete, the really perfect mystery, not in a diminutive building erected by the Athenians to receive a small crowd, but in the cunning and many-sided masterpiece of our universe, with a thousand miracles meeting the eye on every side, not with human beings like the novices, but with immortal gods to initiate mortal men, and with night and day and light and the stars dancing for ever round them?

After saying that even the animal and vegetable world bear witness to the existence of God, and after denouncing the Epicurean theology, Dion continues:

I SAID that the first source of our opinions and conceptions of God was the idea of Him innate in all men, originating in reality and in the world itself. It is no vagrant or chance conclusion, but firm and everlasting, eternal and universal in origin and continuance, the common public possession of the rational being. The next source of our conception of God is acquired, implanted in our souls from without through tales, fables, and customs, some anonymous and unwritten, others in writing and whose ascription is well known. This form of conception is of two kinds, either voluntary and persuasive or compulsory and authoritative. In the first class comes the

[1] The metaphor is from the initiation at the Eleusinian mysteries. The universe itself initiates us in a knowledge of God.

teaching of the poets, in the second that of the lawgivers. Neither of these could be effective but for that primary basis of instinct which made men to welcome and in some sense to foreknow the injunctions of law and the persuasions of poets, some of whom expounded the truth and set forth their conceptions correctly and harmoniously, while some here and there went astray. I cannot here embark on the laborious task of saying whether poetry or law came first in time among the Greeks. It would seem right that the agency which relies on persuasion and not on penalties should be older than that which proceeds by penalties and command. So far the relation of men to their first and immortal Parent, whom we partners in the civilization of Greece call Zeus the Father, proceeds on the same lines as their relation to their earthly and mortal parents. For the affection and care of children for their parents needs no teaching, but has its primal origin in nature and in kindness: the child spontaneously returns the affection and care of that which brought it into the world, feeds, and loves it. But second and third come the teaching of poets and lawgivers: the former urge us not to deny gratitude to our kin and our elders, the cause of our life and being; the latter use compulsion and threaten the disobedient with punishment, without indicating or declaring who our parents are, and for what services the debt is due which they direct us to pay.

There are then these three sources of man's conception of God, one innate, the second derived from poetry, the third from law. A fourth source is the work of statuaries and craftsmen dealing with images and portraits of the gods, and including painters, sculptors, masons, and all who aspire to imitate the divine nature through art.

Dion points out that the arts in substance agree with the poets in their interpretation of the divine, 'the poets appealing to the ear, the artists revealing God through the eye to a more numerous and more ignorant class. But all alike derive their strength from one original source; they were made to honour

and please the Divine.' To these four instruments of revelation Dion adds the philosophers. He then proposes to discuss how some of these witnesses agree, and whether they have helped or harmed religion, and proceeds to examine Phidias.

SUPPOSE one were first to examine before the tribunal of Greece Phidias, that cunning and divine creator of this august and supremely beautiful work of art,[1] and were to say to him, 'Best of artists, no one will deny that you have created for all the Greeks and foreigners, who have come to Olympia so often and in such numbers, a pleasant and delectable sight, a vision of endless delight. It would dazzle the brute creation, could they see it, and make the bulls who year by year are brought to this altar willing to submit to the sacrifice, if that could please the God; it would make eagles, horses, and lions subdue their savage and untamed passion, and keep utter quiet, delighted by what they saw. Even a man whose soul was utterly burdened, who had drained in his life the cup of sorrow and misfortune and had not closed his eyes in sleep, will forget, when he stands opposite this statue, all the terrors and hardships of human life. Such is the vision you created and wrought,

Truly killer of pain is the drug, and of anger and every evil;

such is the brilliance and grace with which your art has clothed it. But now let us ask if it was the just shape and fitting form of the Divine nature that you wrought. The issue at stake is, as you see, no small one. For you, by the power of your art, conquered first Greece and then the rest of the world with this divine and bright vision which you have shown them, so that no one who has seen it could easily form another conception of God.' Perhaps Phidias would reply as follows (he was not tongue-tied, nor the child of a tongue-tied city,[2] and he was the intimate friend of Pericles): 'Fellow Greeks, there is indeed no greater issue than this. It is a question, not of the government or presidency of a single city, but of God, the

[1] The statue of Zeus at Olympia. [2] He was an Athenian.

supreme Ruler, and of His likeness, whether it be fit and right and as near to a just representation of the Divine as man can come, or whether it be unworthy and unbecoming.'

Dion then points out that the anthropomorphic conception of God is not an invention of the sculptor, but a tradition of Greek literature which Phidias followed: further, that sculptors can only portray the Divine through the human form, though poets may describe it in other ways.

'THE divine visions of sun and moon, of the heaven and the stars, are entirely wonderful, simply to behold. But merely to depict the figure of the moon or the orb of the sun would be a simple and inartistic way to portray them. Further, these divinities have an intellectual and moral character of their own, of which nothing is revealed by a mere representation of them. For no sculptor or painter can depict reason and intelligence in themselves.

'But we know, of our knowledge and not of mere guessing, the form in which these faculties are found, and we turn to it, and ascribe to God a human body, because that is the form in which intelligence and reason are found. For want of a true exemplar we try to reveal the invisible and unportrayable in a shape that can be seen and portrayed; we use symbolic means, in the same way as some foreign peoples are said to give to the Divine the likeness of an animal—an unnatural and inadequate method. So the supreme master of beauty, magnificence, and majesty would be far the best artist of images of God. For one cannot say that it is better that there should be no temple or statue of the gods on earth, nor maintain that we should content ourselves with the sight of the heavenly bodies. It is true that all sensible men reverence them, and regard them from afar as blessed deities. But owing to our inclination towards the Divine all men have a strong desire to honour and worship God, approaching and laying hold of Him and persuading Him, with offerings of sacrifices and crowns. Children torn from a mother or father feel a terrible passion of longing,

and often hold out their hands to their absent parents in sleep; and so do men to the gods. They rightly love these beneficent kinsmen, and are eager for any kind of close association with them. So many savage people, whose artistic resources are poor, give the name of God to mountains, inert trees, and shapeless stones.

'You, Homer, wisest of poets and far the first in power as in time, will say that you were the first to reveal to Greece many beautiful likenesses of the gods in general and of the greatest among them—some gentle, others terrible and awful. But my Zeus is peaceful and completely calm, as though he presided over a Greece at unity and undivided. I set him there after counsel with my art and with the wise and good city of Elis, a gentle, majestic, and untroubled figure, the giver of life and livelihood and of all good things, the father, saviour, and guardian of the world. I did what human thought can do, to copy the inconceivable nature of God. Consider whether you do not find my likeness of him congruous with all the titles which the God bears. He is called King for his sovereignty and power; Father for his gentleness and care; God of the City for his relation to law and the commonweal; God of the Race for the kinship between God and man; God of Friendship and Companionship, because he brings all mankind together and wills them to be friends, without private or public enmity; God of Strangers, because we must not neglect the stranger or look on any man as a foreigner; God of Property and the Crops, because he is the cause of the crops and the giver of our wealth and property. As far as one can portray these things without words, has not my art achieved its end? The strength and magnificence of my Zeus are designed to reveal the Ruler and King; his majestic and severe air show the deity of the City and its Laws. Of the kinship of God and man his human form is a kind of symbol. His benevolence, his look of goodness and gentleness typify his attributes as God of Friends, Suppliants and Strangers, as Defender and the like. His simplicity

and magnanimity represent the God of Property and the Crops: for he looks like one who gives and lavishly bestows good things. I represented all these qualities as best I could, since I was unable to express them in words. But my art could not show him letting loose lightning after lightning, wars or destruction of hosts or floods or violent hail or snow, or sending to Greeks or foreign peoples dread strife, which inspires an undying passion for battle and war in weary and fainting men. And if I had been able, I should never have wished to do it.'

If Phidias made such a speech I think that the Greeks might reasonably crown him.[1]

[1] *Or.* 12 (extracts).

VII

PLUTARCH

PLUTARCH was born of an old family in the small Greek town of Chaeronea about A. D. 46. He studied at Athens, travelled widely, played his part in local politics, held some important administrative posts, but loved best his home, his books, and endless talks with his family and friends. In some ways he reminds us of Samuel Johnson. But if he talked as much, he read more, and he had not the Englishman's love of emphasis, contention, and paradox. He was, and is, one of the most widely read of classical writers, and has had admirers as different as Montaigne and Frederick the Great, Beethoven and Napoleon.

All Englishmen know something of him, perhaps without realizing it, for Shakespeare took from him the plots and characters of three plays, and often uses the very words of the Elizabethan translation of Plutarch's *Lives*. These *Lives* or short biographies of illustrious Greeks and Romans are Plutarch's most famous work, and the best of them are hard to beat. The rest of his writings fill five volumes of an English translation. Their compendious title, *Moralia* or 'Moral Works', is a misnomer. They include anecdotes, dinner-table conversations, archaeology, discussions on physics, politics, education, vegetarianism, religion and literature, as well as essays on problems of practical life and morals. They give Plutarch's views on garrulity, on how to praise oneself without annoying others, on false shame, the uses of enemies, the way to distinguish friends from flatterers, the education of children, the part old men should take in public life, the way to profit by lectures, and much else.

On the intellectual side Plutarch is a highly educated, cultivated man with a well-stored memory and a generous and catholic appreciation. He has the temper of the ideal preacher, sees all subjects in their moral aspect, abounds at worst in excellent truisms, at best with a practical yet idealistic common sense, and illustrates his teaching from a bottomless fund of anecdote and quotation. He commands neither the keen intellect of Lucian, nor those lightning flashes which in Plato and Pascal reveal with sudden intensity the abysmal

depths of human life. His reflections remind us rather of Addison. Yet we find in this late-born child of Hellas, though not the profundity of the Greek genius, its hungry interest in the world and in man, its fair-mindedness and sanity, its hatred of extremes, its belief that reason should and can rule life. His philosophic creed is characteristic of his mind. He denounces the Stoics for their paradox, the Epicureans for their selfishness and irreligion, and steers a middle, eclectic course, owing more to Plato than to any other thinker.

We may read Plutarch for his sane idealism, his untainted air of genuine goodness, or for his historical interest. His pages are a guide to the life and ideals of the time. We see a Greek youth in 'On Bringing up a Boy'; 'The Student at Lectures' shows him at the university; 'Advice to Married Couples' reveals him in later life. In 'The Symposiacs' we hear Greek dinner-table talk, moving lightly over the surface of problems of history, literature, science. In fine the *Moralia* show us what an educated Greek in the first century of our era thought about religion and conduct, and how he practised the art of life. The following extracts are chosen with this aim.

The Field of Education

SPEAKING generally, we must say of virtue what it is customary to say of the arts and sciences—that for right action three things must go together, namely, nature, reason, and habit. By reason I mean instruction; by habit I mean exercise. The first elements come from nature; progress, from instruction; the actual use, from practice; the consummation, from all combined. In so far as any of these is defective, character must necessarily be maimed. Nature without instruction is blind; instruction without nature is futile; practice without both is abortive. In farming, the soil must first be good; next, the farmer must know his business; third, the seeds must be sound. Similarly with education. Nature is the soil, the teacher is the farmer, the lessons and precepts are the seed. It may be confidently asserted that all three were harmoniously blended in the souls of those men whose renown is

universal—Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and others who have won imperishable glory.

Blest indeed, and divinely favoured, is the man on whom Heaven has bestowed each and all. Yet it would be a great, or rather a total, mistake to suppose that when natural gift is defective, no right moral instruction and practice will lead one to improve his faulty nature in some attainable degree. For while neglect will ruin an excellent natural gift, teaching will correct an inferior one. Be careless, and you miss a thing, however easy: take pains, and you secure it, however difficult.[1]

The Importance of Education

IN brief, then, I assert—and it would be fairer to regard me as repeating an oracle than as giving advice—that in these matters the one and essential thing, the first, middle, and last, is a sound upbringing and right education. It is this, I say, which leads to virtue and happiness.

Other blessings are on the human plane; they are slight and not worth serious pursuit. Good birth is a distinction, but the boon depends on one's ancestors. Wealth is a prize, but its possession depends on fortune, which often carries it off from those who have it and bestows it on those who never hoped for it. Moreover, great wealth is a target exposed to any rogue of a servant or blackmailer who is minded to 'aim a purse' at it. And, worst of all, even the basest of men have their share of it. Fame, again, is imposing, but uncertain. Beauty, though greatly courted, is short-lived; health, though highly prized, is unstable; strength is a thing to be envied, but it falls an easy prey to disease and age. Let us tell any one who prides himself on his bodily strength that he is manifestly under a delusion. How small a fraction is human strength of the might of other animals, such as the elephant, the bull, and the lion!

Meanwhile culture is the only thing in us that is immortal

[1] *De liberis educandis*, tr. T. G. Tucker. Some critics deny Plutarch the authorship of the essay. But it has all the marks of him.

and divine. In the nature of man there are two sovereign elements—understanding and reason. It is the place of the understanding to direct the reason and of the reason to serve the understanding. Fortune cannot overcome them, calumny cannot rob us of them, disease cannot corrupt them, old age cannot impair them. The understanding is the only thing that renews its youth as it grows old, and, while time carries off everything else, it brings old age one gift—that of knowledge. When, again, war comes like a torrent, tearing and sweeping everything away, it is of our mental culture alone that it cannot rob us. Stilpo, the Megarian philosopher, made what seems a memorable answer when Demetrius, after enslaving the city and razing it to the ground, asked him if he had lost anything. 'Oh no!' said he, 'for virtue is not made spoil of war.' The reply of Socrates is evidently to the same tune and purpose. It was Gorgias, I believe, who asked him his opinion of the Great King, and whether he considered him happy. 'I have no knowledge', said Socrates, 'as to the state of his character and culture.' He assumed that happiness depended upon these, and not upon the gifts of fortune.

Not only should the education of our children be treated as of the very first importance, but I once more urge that we should insist upon its being of the sound and genuine kind. From pretentious nonsense our sons should be kept as far aloof as possible. To please the many is to displease the wise.[1]

Philosophy in Education

PHILOSOPHY should be put at the head of all mental culture. The services which have been invented for the care of the body are two—medicine and gymnastics—the one imparting health, the other good condition. But for the weaknesses and ailments of the soul philosophy is the only thing to be prescribed. It is from and with philosophy that we

[1] Id.

can tell what is becoming or disgraceful, what is just or unjust, what course, in short, is to be chosen or shunned. It teaches us how to behave towards the gods, our parents, our elders, the laws, our rulers, friends, wives, children, and servants: that we should worship the gods, honour our parents, respect our elders, obey the laws, give way to our rulers, love our friends, be continent towards our wives, show affection to our children, and abstain from cruelty to our slaves. Above all, it warns us against excess of joy when prosperous and excess of grief when unfortunate; against dissoluteness in our pleasures, or fury and brutality in our anger. These I judge to be chief among the blessings conferred by philosophy. To bear adversity nobly is to act the brave man; to bear prosperity unassumingly, the modest mortal. To get the better of pleasures by reason needs wisdom; to master anger requires no ordinary character.

Perfect men I take to be those who can blend practical ability with philosophy, and who can achieve both of two best and greatest ends—the life of public utility as men of affairs, and the calm and tranquil life as students of philosophy. For there are three kinds of life: the life of action, the life of thought, and the life of enjoyment. When life is dissolute and enslaved to pleasure, it is mean and animal; when it is all thought and fails to act, it is futile; when it is all action and destitute of philosophy, it is crude and blundering. We should therefore do our best to engage both in public business and in the pursuit of philosophy, as occasion offers.[1]

Fathers and Sons

WHILE these principles are right and expedient, I have a word to say upon a human aspect of the matter. I have no desire that a father's disposition should be altogether harsh and unyielding. I would have him frequently condone a fault in his junior and recollect that he was once

[1] Id.

young himself. The physician mixes his bitter drugs with syrup, and so finds a way to work benefit through the medium of enjoyment. In the same way a father should blend his severe reprimands with kindliness, at one time giving the boy's desires a loose or easy rein, at another time tightening it. If possible, he should take misdeeds calmly ; failing that, his anger should be seasonable and should quickly cool down. It is better for a father to be sharp-tempered than sullen-tempered ; to sulk and bear malice goes far to prove a lack of parental affection. Sometimes, when a fault is committed, it is a good thing to pretend ignorance, turning to advantage the dim sight and defective hearing of old age, and refusing to see or hear certain occurrences which one hears and sees. We put up with the lapses of a friend. Is it strange to do so with those of a child ? A slave is often heavy-headed from a debauch, without our taking him to task. The other day you refused the boy money ; there are times to meet his requests. The other day you were indignant ; there are times to be lenient. Perhaps he has cozened you through a servant ; restrain your anger. Has he borrowed the team from the farm ? Does he come reeking of yesterday's bout ? Do not notice it. Smelling of perfumes ? Say nothing. Such is the way to manage the restiveness of youth.

A son who cannot resist pleasure and is deaf to remonstrance should be put into matrimonial harness, that being the surest way of tying a young man down. The woman who becomes his wife should not, however, be to any great extent his superior either in birth or means. *Keep to your own level* is a sound maxim, and a man who marries much above him finds himself, not the husband of the woman, but the slave of the dowry.

Above all things a father should set an example to his children in his own person, by avoiding all faults of commission or omission. His life should be the glass by which they form themselves and are put out of conceit with all ugliness of act or speech. For him to rebuke his erring sons when guilty of the

same errors himself, is to become his own accuser while ostensibly theirs. Indeed, if his life is bad, he is disqualified from reproving even a slave, much more his son. To obtain good behaviour from our children we should therefore strive to carry out every moral duty.

To compass the whole of the foregoing elements of success is perhaps visionary—a counsel of perfection. But to cultivate the majority of them, though itself requiring good fortune as well as much care, is at any rate a thing within the reach of a human being.[1]

Independence in Education

THE mind is not a vessel which calls for filling. It is a pile, which simply requires kindling-wood to start the flame of eagerness for original thought and ardour for truth. Suppose some one goes to borrow from his neighbour's fire, and then, on finding a large bright blaze, persists in staying and basking on the spot. It is the same when a man comes to another to borrow reason, and does not realize that he must kindle a light of his own in the shape of thinking for himself, but sits enchanted with enjoyment of the lecture. He derives from the lesson a ruddy glow or outward brilliance, but he fails to drive out the mould and darkness from within by the warming power of philosophy.

If therefore any advice is needed for the hearing of lectures, it is to remember the rule just given—to practise independent thought along with learning. We shall thus attain, not to the ability of the ' well-informed ' man, but to a deep-seated philosophic power. Right listening will be for us the introduction to right living.[2]

The following advice on married life is from a letter to a young husband and wife. Sensible yet idealistic, with a touch —but not more—of the Turk, it shows Greek marriage at its best.

[1] Id.

[2] *De recta ratione audiendi* (*fin.*), tr. Tucker.

To Pollianus and Eurydice with Plutarch's Best Wishes

I HAVE taken the main points of the lessons which you have repeatedly heard, brought up as you have been in the company of Philosophy. I have arranged them in a series of brief comparisons to make them easier to remember, and am sending them as a present to you both. In doing so I pray that the Muses may graciously lend aid to Aphrodite, since, if it is their province to see that a lyre or a harp shall be in tune, it is no less so to provide that the music of the married home shall be harmonized by reason and philosophy. When people in olden times assigned a seat with Aphrodite to Hermes, it was because the pleasure of marriage stands in special need of reason; when to Persuasion and the Graces, it was in order that the married pair might obtain their wishes from each other by means of persuasion, and not by contention and strife.

It is especially at the beginning that married people should beware of quarrel and friction. Let them note how vessels which have been mended will at first easily pull to pieces on the slightest occasion, but as time goes on and they become solid at the seams, it is as much as fire and iron can do to separate the parts.

Fire is readily kindled in chaff, dry rushes, or hare's fur, but quickly goes out unless it gets a further hold upon something capable both of keeping it in and feeding it. So with that fierce blaze of passion in the newly married. You must not rely upon it nor expect it to last, unless it is built round the moral character, gets a hold upon your rational part, and so obtains a permanent vitality.

Cato expelled from the Senate a man who had kissed his own wife in the presence of his daughter. This, perhaps, was too severe a step. But if—as is the case—it is unseemly to be kissing in company, it is surely more unseemly to be scolding and quarrelling in company, and, while treating your love-

passages as a sacred secret between you and your wife, to make an open display of fault-finding and reproach.

A man who dislikes to see his wife eating with him teaches her to satisfy her appetite when she gets by herself. Similarly, one who is never a merry companion to her, nor shares in her sport and laughter, teaches her to look for private pleasures apart from him.

When the Roman was admonished by his friends for having divorced a wife who was chaste, rich, and beautiful, he stretched out his shoe and remarked: 'Yes, and this looks fine and new, but no one knows where it chafes me.' The wife must not rely upon her dowry, her birth, or her beauty. The matters in which she touches her husband most closely are conversation, character, and companionship. Instead of making these harsh and vexatious day after day, she must render them compatible, soothing, and grateful. Physicians are more afraid of fevers which spring from vague causes gradually accumulating, than of those for which there is a great and manifest reason. So it is these little, continual, daily frictions between man and wife, which the world knows nothing of, that do most to create the rifts which ruin married life.

On another occasion, when a youthful courtier had married a handsome woman of bad repute, Olympias remarked, 'The fellow has no judgement; otherwise he would not have married with his eyes.' Marriage should not be made with the eyes; neither should it with the fingers, as it is in the case of some, who reckon up the amount of the dower, instead of calculating the companionable quality, of the wife they are marrying.

Xenocrates being somewhat harsh in character, though otherwise a high type of man, Plato recommended him to *sacrifice to the Graces*. Now I take it that a woman of strict morals stands in special need of the graces in dealing with her husband, so that—as Metrodorus used to say—she may live with him on pleasant terms and not 'in a temper because she

is chaste '. A woman should no more forget to be amiable because she is faithful, than to be neat because she is thrifty. Decorum in a woman is rendered as disagreeable by harshness as frugality is by sluttishness.

Pheidias, in representing the Elean Aphrodite with her foot upon a tortoise, meant women to take it as a symbol of house-keeping and silence. A woman should talk either to, or through the medium of, her husband ; nor should she resent it if, like a player on the clarinet, she finds a more impressive utterance through another tongue than through her own.

The Greeks who accompanied Cyrus received the following order from their commanders : ' If the enemy come shouting to the attack, await them in silence ; if they come in silence, charge to meet them with a shout.' When a husband has his fits of anger, if he raises his voice, a sensible wife keeps quiet ; if he is silent, she soothes him by talking to him in a coaxing way.

As for you, Eurydice, above all things do your best to keep touch with the sayings of wise and good men, and to have continually in your mouth those utterances which you learned by heart in my school when a girl. By so doing, you will not only be a joy to your husband, but the admiration of other women, when they see how, at no expense, you can adorn yourself with so much distinction and dignity.

This rich woman's pearls, that foreign lady's silks, are not to be worn without paying a large price for them. But the ornaments of Gorgo the wife of Leonidas, of the Claudia of ancient history, and of Cornelia the daughter of Scipio, you may wear for nothing ; and with this adornment your life may be as happy as it is distinguished.[1]

Plutarch's *Advice on Politics*[2] gives excellent common-sense advice to those in authority. The following extract from

[1] *Coniugalia praecepta*, tr. Tucker.
[2] *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, tr. Tucker.

another essay shows the ideal of absolute power conceived by thinkers of the period and realized in the Antonine emperors:

DIFFICULT is the task of advising a ruler how to rule. To admit reason, he fears, is to admit a ruler whose law of duty will make a slave of him and curtail the advantage he derives from power. He has yet to learn a lesson from Theopompus, the Spartan king, who was the first to modify the powers of the throne by means of that of the ephors. When his wife reproached him for proposing to leave to his children less authority than he had inherited, he replied: 'Nay, greater, because more assured.'

In most cases, however, monarchs or rulers show as little wisdom as a tasteless sculptor, who fancies that to represent a figure with a huge stride, strained muscles, and gaping mouth, is to make it appear massive and imposing. They imagine that an arrogant tone, harsh looks, short temper, and exclusiveness give them the true regal air of awe and majesty. In reality they are not a bit better than a colossal statue with the outward shape and form of a god or demigod, while the inside is a mass of earth, stone, or lead. So a ruler must begin by acquiring rule within himself. Let him set his own soul straight, and make his own character firm, and then begin adjusting his subjects thereto. You cannot set upright, when you are falling; teach, when you are ignorant; discipline, when unruly; command, when disobedient; govern, when ungoverned.

By whom, then, is the ruler to be ruled? By the

Law,
Sovereign of mortals and immortals all,

as Pindar says; not a law written outwardly in books or on wooden tables, but a living law of reason in himself, abiding with him, watching him, and never leaving his soul destitute of guidance. The King of Persia kept one chamberlain whose special function was to enter in the morning and say to him: 'Rise, Sire, and attend to matters which Great Oromazdes

meant for your concern.' The ruler who has learned wisdom and self-control hears the same voice of exhortation from within. It was a saying of Polemon that love is '*serving the gods in the care and protection of the young*'. With more truth it might be said that a ruler serves God in the care and protection of men, by dispensing, or safeguarding, the blessings which God gives to mankind. In the heavens the sun and moon were set by God as His own beauteous image; and, in a state, the same shining embodiment is to be found in the ruler

God-fearing, who justice upholdeth,

—that is to say, when he holds, not a sceptre, but a mind which is the reason of God; not when he holds the thunderbolt or trident with which some represent themselves in statue or picture, rendering their folly odious to Heaven by such impossible assertion. For God visits with righteous wrath him who makes pretence of thunder or thunderbolt or darting sun-ray; but when a man studies to emulate His goodness, and to take a pattern by His virtue and benevolence, He delights in furthering him and bestowing a portion of His own righteousness, justice, truth, and mercy. Not fire or light, not the course of the sun, the risings and settings of the stars, everlastingness and immortality, are more divine than these attributes. For it is not by reason of length of life that God is happy, but by reason of the virtue which rules. This is 'divine'.[1]

The *Symposiaca*, or 'Dinner-table Talks', show the talk at the dinner-parties of educated Greeks in a small Boeotian town. Here are some of their topics: Do the Jews abstain from swine's flesh because they worship pigs or because they have an antipathy to them? Is a dinner of different courses or of one kind of food only more easy to digest? Why do old men like their wine neat? Why does fresh water wash clothes better than salt? Why cannot you graft firs or pine trees? Why is new wine less intoxicating than old? Does the land or the sea afford better food? Why are signet-rings

[1] *Ad principem ineruditum*, tr. Tucker.

worn on the fourth finger? Is it probable that the number of the stars is even or odd? Why does pouring oil on the sea calm it? Why is salt given to cattle? Why is rain better for plants than artificial watering? I have probably lowered Plutarch in your estimation by telling you what he talked about at dinner. It is a mixed bag, and some of the same game hardly worth a cartridge. The dinner-parties in fifth-century Athens would have yielded something better. But Plutarch's talk is characteristic of the insatiable intellectual interest of the Greeks, and Samuel Johnson at any rate would have understood this passion for conversation ranging thus over earth and heaven. My extract shows the worse side of Plutarch, mental ingenuity combined with inexcusable ignorance. In a previous conversation one speaker has argued that the Jews do not eat swine's flesh because a boar killed Adonis, who is the same as Dionysus, who is the god of the Jews. He now endeavours to prove the latter statement.

IN the first place, the season and the character of their greatest and most holy feast is appropriate to Dionysus, for they keep their so-called fast when the vintage is ripe and set out tables laden with all kinds of fruits under booths and huts made principally of branches and ivy: the day before the feast they call Tabernacle Day. A few days later they celebrate another festival, called, not obscurely but definitely, after Bacchus. They have a sort of festival of carrying branches and thyrsi,[1] when they enter the Temple with thyrsi in their hands. What they do inside we do not know, but the service is probably some Bacchic rite, for in invoking God they use small trumpets, like the Argives at their Dionysiac worship, and they are preceded by others playing the harps, whom they call Levites, a name derived either from Lysius [2] or, more probably, Evius.[2] I fancy too that their Sabbath festival is not entirely unrelated to Dionysus. For even at the present day the worshippers of Bacchus are often called Sabi—from a cry which they utter in their worship of the god. You can find a confirmation of this in Demosthenes and Menander. It is plausible

[1] Sticks wreathed with ivy and vine leaves used in Bacchic festivals.
[2] Titles of Dionysus.

to suppose that the word was invented to suggest the excitement [1] which seizes the Bacchic worshippers. There is further evidence in the fact that when they keep the Sabbath they encourage each other to drink and get intoxicated; if this is impossible they make it a rule at any rate to taste wine. It may be maintained that these arguments are merely plausible. But the strongest proof of their truth is afforded by the high-priest, who comes forward at their festivals wearing a mitre and dressed in a gold-embroidered fawnskin, with buskins and a tunic reaching to his feet. As with us, a number of bells hang on his dress, and ring when he walks.[2]

Not Plato himself is more genuinely religious than Plutarch, and the next two extracts illustrate well the tradition of rational faith, which is a Greek gift to Europe. The first of them is from the treatise on Superstition, a vice which, religious as he is, Plutarch declares more dangerous than atheism. Incidentally the passage shows the sort of religion from which Epicurus wished to free mankind.

IGNORANCE and error about the gods have from the first flowed in two streams. The one, acting on the stony ground of hard characters, has issued in atheism; the other, in the marshy soil of weak ones, has produced superstition.

The ignorance of atheism is distressing, its blindness and indifference to so mighty a power is a great misfortune of the soul, for in ignoring the idea of God it has extinguished the chief and brightest of its many eyes. But in superstition there is from the outset a passionate, cankering, disturbing, slavish quality.

The atheist sees no gods at all, the superstitious man thinks them evil. One overlooks them; the other conceives a friendly, paternal, pure, protecting power, as terrible, tyrannical, in-

[1] The Greek word is *sobēsis*.

[2] *Quaest. Sympos.* iv. 6. Plutarch's facts are, though inaccurate, sounder than his inferences. The references are to the Feast of Trumpets (*Leviticus* xxiii. 24) and the Feast of Tabernacles (ib. xxiii. 34 f.), both held in October. For the high-priest's dress see *Exodus* xxviii. 4.

jurious, savage, and bestial. The superstitious put their trust in sculptors, casters, and moulders, give God a human form and fashion, make and worship these creations. They despise philosophers and statesmen, when these point to the union in God of majesty with goodness, magnanimity, kindliness, benignity. Atheism is insensitive and incredulous of a beneficial power, superstition is frightened and confused in its presence. In fine, atheism is insensitiveness towards an unrecognized Deity, superstition is oversensitiveness towards a good being fancied to be evil.[1]

First observe the atheist in misfortune, and note his disposition. If generally reasonable, he takes things in silence as they come, and looks to himself for help and consolation. If resentful or extremely distressed, he directs his complaints against chance and fortune, and exclaims that there is no justice or providence in the world, and that the whole course of human life is chaotic, confused, and disordered. That is not the method of the superstitious man. If the least misfortune befalls him he goes and builds on the top of his distress a great pile of distressing and ineradicable troubles. He calls to mind terrors, fears, suspicions, disorders, and levels at his fate every kind of lamentation and complaint. Instead of blaming man or fortune or the occasion or himself, he lays all at the door of God, and declares that a divine deluge of disaster is pouring from the Deity upon him. He supposes that he is not unlucky but odious to Heaven, that he is being punished and chastened by the gods, and that all his sufferings are deserved and due to his own offences. The atheist when he is ill recalls and reckons up excesses in food or drink, disorders in his way of life, excessive fatigues, unusual changes of climate or locality. When he suffers a political reverse, or loses his popular reputation, or falls into discredit with the emperor, he looks for the cause in himself and his entourage :

Where went I wrong ? What did ? What left undone ?

[1] *De superstitione*, cc. 1, 5, 6 (extracts).

But to the superstitious man any bodily infirmity, any financial loss, the death of a child, a political failure or mishap is described as a blow from the hand of God, a daemonic visitation.[1] He does not dare to relieve or dispel, to remedy or resist his misfortunes, for fear he may seem to be fighting with God and resisting his chastening. If he is ill, the doctor is sent packing ; if in sorrow, the door is shut against the philosopher's advice and comfort. Fellow, he says, let me pay my penalty ; I am irreligious, accursed, hated of God and daemon.[1]

With an atheist who is needlessly distressed and miserable one can dry his tears, cut his hair, and change his dress. But how is one to address, or where is one to help, the superstitious ? He sits outside his house in sackcloth, with some dirty rags about him : often he rolls naked in the mud, exclaiming about his sins and offences, how he ate this or drank that or walked along a road where the deity forbade. At best, if his superstition attacks him in a mild form, he sits at home fumigating and purifying himself, and the old women, in Bion's words, ' bring anything that turns up and fasten and hang it on him, as if he was a peg '.[2]

I feel astonished when men say that atheism is irreligious but that superstition is not. What is your opinion ? If it is irreligious to disbelieve in God, is it not far more so to believe in the sort of gods whom the superstitious worship ? Personally I would rather men said that Plutarch had never existed and that he was not Plutarch, than that they described him as an unstable, changeable man, quick to anger, revengeful of accidents, annoyed by trifles, and declared that if you invite others to dinner and ignore him, or if you are too busy to come to the door and welcome him, he will grip your body and devour it, or seize your child and beat him to death, or send a wild beast into your crops and ruin your harvest. Timotheus was reciting a poem at Athens in which he called Artemis

[1] Daemons or spirits (not necessarily bad) play an increasing part in the theology of the age.

[2] Ib. c. 7.

Frantic and Bacchant and raving and mad.

The poet Cinesias got up in the audience and said, I hope your daughter will be like that. But this is the kind of thing, or worse, that the superstitious believe about Artemis and other gods. Yet was Niobe guilty of any blasphemy against Leto as bad as the belief which superstition enjoins on its foolish followers, that the insulted deity shot poor Niobe's

Six daughters and six youthful sons ? [1]

So implacable was she, so hungry for the misery of another. If the goddess was really angry, a hater of wickedness, vexed by an insult, and annoyed instead of amused by human stupidity and ignorance, the people she ought to have shot were those who in tale or book made such libellous charges of cruelty and bitterness against her. We blame Hecuba for a savage and animal ferocity when she says

His midmost liver may I grip and gnaw.[2]

But the superstitious believe that if we eat sardines or anchovies the Syrian goddess will devour our shins, consume our body with sores, and rot our liver. Is it impious to say bad things about the gods, but innocent to think them ? Or is it not rather the blasphemous belief that makes the words blasphemous ?

Plutarch then points out that superstition leads to irreligion.

THE atheist is not in any sense responsible for superstition, but superstition affords an origin for atheism and an excuse for its existence, which, if neither true nor just, is not entirely without colour. Men have not pronounced the world devoid of God, because they find anything to criticize as faulty or irregular in the heavens, the stars, the seasons, the

[1] Legend told that Niobe, declaring that her children were more beautiful than Leto's, was thus punished by the goddess Artemis, Leto's daughter. Note how an intelligent Greek viewed the dark stories of mythology.

[2] The words of Hecuba about Achilles when he killed her son.

moon's orbit, in the sun's motions round the earth,[1] 'artificers of night and day', in the way animals live or crops are produced. It is the ridiculous acts and feelings of superstition, its phrases, motions, quackery, magic, revolutions, drummings, its impure purifications and foul cleansings,[2] its savage and lawless punishments and revilements in temples—it is these things which cause some men to say that it is better that gods should not exist, if they accept and enjoy such worship, if they are so outrageous, petty, and easy to offend. Would it not have been better for the Gauls and Scythians to have had no notion or idea or account of the gods, than to suppose that gods existed who delighted in the blood of slaughtered human beings, and thought this the most perfect rite of sacrifice?

Let us then avoid superstition, but do it without injury or danger to ourselves. Let us not be like people who, in carelessly and thoughtlessly escaping from a fire or an attack by brigands or wild animals, fall into a trackless country full of pits and precipices: as some, in the attempt to escape superstition, fall into a rough and iron atheism, and overleap religion, which lies between.[3]

Plutarch hates superstition as strongly as did the Epicureans. But, unlike them, he did not empty out the baby with the bath. In the following passage he attacks the Epicurean scheme in which God was banished from the world and immortality discredited. He argues that even the religion of the average man, with all its weaknesses, is better than none. Still more is this true of the highest forms of religion, in which love casts out fear. Plutarch then contests the view that it is an advantage to disbelieve in a future life.

IT is better that there should be an element of awe and fear mingled and present with the belief in God, than that, in our efforts to avoid this, we should leave ourselves neither hope nor gratitude, nor confidence in the day of prosperity, nor re-

[1] Note how Plutarch has forgotten a truth known by Aristarchus three centuries earlier.

[2] Such as the bath of bull's blood, by which the Mithras worshipper was purified.

[3] Ib. cc. 10, 12, 14 (extracts).

course to heaven in distress. We ought, of course, to expel superstition from our religion as we should expel rheum from the eyes ;[1] but if this is impossible, we ought not along with it to amputate and blind the faith of mankind in God. This faith is not dismal or full of terrors, as the Epicureans with their slanders about providence pretend—a childish bugbear or a tragic Fury from Hell. There are few men that fear God who would be better without this fear. For they fear Him as a King gentle to the good and severe to the bad, and this single terror, which keeps them from wrongdoing, sets them free from the many terrors that follow it. They keep sin suppressed and in check, and suffer fewer fears than those who indulge it, and then repent and are alarmed. The attitude of the masses to God, the attitude of the ignorant man of average goodness, has a touch, a throb, of fear mixed with reverence and respect : that is why it is called superstition.[2] But infinitely greater and more important than this is the element of confidence and abounding joy, the instinct that prays to God for all the benefits of prosperity, and welcomes them as His gift. There is no stronger evidence of this than our feelings at sacrifices or religious ceremonies. The soul in these hours is not, as you might suppose, agonized or discouraged or cast down, as if it was in the presence of a tyrant or a terrible chastising power : but where it most supposes and conceives God to be present, it dismisses most completely grief and fear and doubt, and surrenders itself to delight. The man who renounces his belief in Providence is excluded from this. For it is not the roast flesh nor the flowing wine at religious festivals that make the worshippers' joy, but the belief and good hope that God is present and favourable and pleased to accept them.

We have considered religion as it affects the wicked or the average man. Now let us examine the best and most religious type—how great are their pleasures in their pure conception

[1] An expressive, if ugly, metaphor.
[2] δεισιδαιμονία, literally ' fear of the divine '.

of God as the Prince of all good, the Father of all beauty, who, as He may experience no evil, so may do none. For He is good, and in the good no envy, fear, anger, nor hatred find a place. It is the property of good to do no harm, as it is the property of heat to warm, not to make cold. Anger, wrath, enmity, and terror are a world apart from grace, kindliness, humanity, and benevolence. The former belong to the world of evil and weakness, the latter to that of goodness and power. So God is not influenced by passion or by favour ; it is the divine nature to help and be kind ; it is alien from it to show anger or do harm.[1] 'Mighty Zeus in heaven goes first, driving a winged car, ordering and caring for all : ' and among the other gods, one is The Giver, one The Gentle, one The Protector against harm, while Apollo, in Pindar's words,

Gentlest to mortals was proved.

'Everything', says Diogenes,[2] 'belongs to God, and friends' possessions are shared in common, and the good are God's friends. It is impossible for those whom God loves to prosper ill, and impossible for the right-minded and just not to be loved by God.' Do you think that those who deny a Providence are not punished enough by cutting themselves off from this great pleasure and delight which we believers in the Divine enjoy ? Do they need any other punishment ? It is worth while quoting, in his own words, Hermogenes' view of God : 'These gods, who have all knowledge and all power, are so dear to me, that in their care for me I am never forgotten by them day or night, wherever I go or whatever I do : and by their foreknowledge they reveal to me whatever will happen, sending me messengers, omens, and dreams.'

It is natural that what comes to us from the gods should be beautiful. And the fact that it comes through their agency is of itself a source of great pleasure, unbounded confidence, and

[1] Plutarch proceeds to support his argument by quotations from poetry and from the titles applied to the gods.

[2] See p. 28.

joyful elation—like a ray of light smiling on the good. Those who take a different view deprive success of its sweetest element, and leave no refuge for misfortune. In dark days they have one resource, one harbour to expect—dissolution and unconsciousness. It is like a comforter in a storm at sea who appeared and said that the ship had no pilot, and that the Dioscuri [1] would not come to our help,

> To calm the onset of the angry sea
> And the swift whistling winds :

still, that there was nothing to be alarmed at, but that in another moment the ship would be engulfed by the sea, or strike a rock and quickly break up. For this is what Epicurus preaches in terrible illness or extreme misfortune. ' Do you hope that your religion will bring you any good from God ? Mere vanity : blessed and incorruptible beings are insensible to anger or favour. Do you expect anything better than this life after its close ? You are deceived : what is dissolved is unconscious, and what is unconscious is nothing to us.' Why then, sir, do you tell me to eat and be merry ? ' Because in a great storm shipwreck is near at hand : your extreme distress will bring you to death's door.' A wrecked passenger whose ship is shattered buoys himself up on a hope of ' bringing his carcase ashore ' and escaping by swimming : but in the Epicureans' philosophy there appears for the soul

> No place of landing from the hoary sea.

The soul is at once obliterated, dissolved, and destroyed before the body ; and so, apparently, it is delighted with the divine and supremely sage doctrine, that death, destruction, and annihilation are the end of its misfortunes.[2]

Plutarch then argues that nothing is gained, but much lost, by disbelieving in a future life. As in the last extract, he

[1] Castor and Pollux, the sailor's gods.
[2] *Non suaviter posse vivi secundum Epicurum*, cc. 20–23.

examines successively the effect of the belief in immortality on the lives of the bad, the good, and the average man.

BAD and wicked men, frightened of the penalties and punishments of the next world, afraid to do wrong, and therefore keeping the more quiet, will have more pleasant and peaceful lives. For Epicurus regards the fear of punishment as the sole deterrent from wrongdoing. So we should bring before their eyes the fears of superstition and set in motion against them from heaven and earth terrors, bottomless pits, alarms, suspicions, in the hope that these may dismay them into gentler and better ways. It is better for them to be good from a fear of what follows death, than to be bad and lead precarious and anxious lives.

For the majority of mankind, the expectation of eternal life involved in legendary religion (even when it is accompanied by a fear of the next world),[1] and the longing for existence, which is the most ancient and powerful of all desires, have something pleasant and delightful in them which far outweighs those childish fears. So when men lose child or wife or friend, they would far prefer that these should continue to exist and survive in a state of misery than that they should be destroyed and annihilated. They love to hear the dead described as 'changed' or ' passed away ', phrases which indicate that death is a transformation and not a destruction of the soul, and so repeat

E'en there will I remember my dead friend,[2]

or

What shall I say to Hector or old Priam ? [3]

The feeling leads to false ideas : and they feel more at ease if they bury with the dead their arms or belongings or the clothes they used to wear. If their lost ones seem to ask or want anything, they like giving it. So Periander burnt her dress with his dead wife as though she was cold and needed it. They are

[1] Reading καὶ ἅμα φόβῳ. [2] Homer.

[3] Euripides. Polyxena, about to die, asks her mother what message she shall take to her brother and father.

not much dismayed by such things as Aeacus and Ascalaphus and Acheron ;[1] indeed they have dedicated dances, theatres, and various agreeable musical performances to them. But all feel a shudder at the dread, gloomy, sullen face of death—the world where there is no sensation or memory or knowledge. Such phrases as ' he has perished ', ' he is destroyed ', ' he is not ', upset and distress them : for instance,

> 'Neath earth's deep trees he'll lie and miss his share
> In revelry and music of the lyre
> And the delightful calling of the flute :

or

> Gone is our life—once the lips' bar is crossed—
> Past all return, recapture or rewinning.

So it is death added to death when men say, ' We men are born once and cannot be born twice, but for all time must no longer be '.[2] The present seems a small thing, or rather nothing at all, in comparison with eternity. Men disdain and neglect it as something which they cannot enjoy, and are contemptuous of goodness and activity, depressed and despising themselves as the unstable creatures of a day, born to no considerable achievement. The idea that ' in dissolution we lose consciousness and its loss is nothing to us ' [2] does not remove the fear of death, but gives a further demonstration of it. For the very thing which our nature fears is

> All of you pass into water and earth,

the dissolution of the soul into something that neither thinks nor feels ; and Epicurus, by making this dissolution a dispersion into atoms and space, cuts off still more completely the hope of immortality. Such an idea makes almost all men and women anxious to carry water in leaky vessels [3] or suffer the

[1] A judge, a denizen, and a river of the underworld.
[2] Epicurus.
[3] A punishment of the Greek underworld, of which Cerberus is the watch-dog.

bite of Cerberus, if only they can escape annihilation and remain alive. Yet few, as I said, are alarmed by these terrors, the fancies and fabulous stories of their mothers and nurses. And those who are afraid suppose that they are helped by certain cleansing and other rites, which sanctify them and enable them to live after death a life of play and dance, in a world of light and clear air and human speech. But the idea of being deprived of existence distresses young and old. For, in the words of Euripides,

> We are sick for life, and cling
> On earth to this nameless and shining thing.[1]

By destroying the belief in immortality, the Epicureans destroy the sweetest and greatest hopes of mankind. Think of the good who have lived upright and religious lives and expect a glorious and divine world to come. Like athletes, who receive their crown, not during the contest but when it has ended in victory, these men, believing that the prize of life is awarded at its close to the good, are wonderfully inspired to goodness in the light of these hopes. Besides, no lover of truth and of the vision of reality finds his desire satisfied on earth. In the cloud and mist of the body his reason is confused and dim. Like a bird he gazes heavenward,[2] hoping to fly away from the body into a great bright world, and he makes his soul unencumbered and ready to take leave of mortal things, using philosophy as a preparation for death. Death seems to him a great and perfect blessing, for he believes that hereafter the soul will live a real life, and that on earth it has no waking existence, but is in a world of dreams.

If then the saying of Epicurus is true, that ' the memory of a dead friend is in every way sweet ', we can see of what joy we deprive ourselves, if we think that it is the mere ghosts and phantoms of their dead friends, things without sense or feeling,

[1] Hippolytus (tr. Murray).
[2] The very metaphor of Plato, from whom this contrast of the material and the spiritual worlds is drawn.

that men pursue and welcome; if we do not expect really to rejoin them and to see a good wife or a dear father or mother, if we do not share Plato's hopes of that loving intercourse.

Besides, those who think death the beginning of another and better life, if they are happy on earth, enjoy that happiness the more, because they expect something yet better: while if their lot on earth is not to their mind, they are not greatly distressed. Their expectation of a good and glorious hereafter, full of infinite pleasures and hopes, obliterates and erases from the mind all the shortcomings and disappointments of life. They bear its chances lightly and easily; it seems but a journey, or rather a brief excursion during one.[1]

Hitherto we have seen one side of Plutarch's religion. Another side appears in the curious dialogues where he expounds the Isis religion, or discusses why the oracles of his own day were given in prose, why oracles are growing uncommon, what is the face in the moon, &c. The student of the history of religion and science will be interested by this curious mixture of erudition and credulity: others will see in it chiefly the inconclusiveness of bad metaphysics and the unprofitableness of obsolete science. Astronomy, daemons, the significance of numbers figure largely—elements present but subordinate in earlier Greek thought. Here they begin to get out of hand; we divine the gathering clouds of mysticism and superstition, in which the clear Greek spirit was to be lost.

I quote two passages, full of the strangeness of pure romance. The first contains some stories told to prove the mortality of daemons—beings intermediate between God and man, to whose agency Plutarch ascribes oracles.

EPITHERSES, my fellow townsman and teacher in grammar, said that he was once on a voyage to Italy, and embarked on board a ship carrying cargo and many passengers. It was already evening when the breeze died down off the Echinades Islands; and the ship drifted till it was near

[1] *Non posse suaviter vivi sec. Epicurum*, c. 25 f. (extracts). The dialogue contains a complete discussion of the moral ideals of Epicurus.

Paxi. Most on board were awake, and many still drinking after supper. Suddenly a voice was heard from the island of Paxi; some one was calling Thamus in a loud voice, so that they all wondered. Thamus was an Egyptian pilot, not even known by name to many of the passengers. Twice he was called, and remained silent; the third time he paid attention to the caller, who raised his voice and said: 'When you reach the Palodes, tell them that Great Pan is dead.' Hearing this, Epitherses said, all were in consternation, and began discussing with one another whether it were better to do as was ordered, or to refuse to meddle and to let it be. They decided in the end that, if there were a breeze, Thamus should sail past quietly; but if there should be calm about the place, he should hail, and report. When he was off the Palodes, as there was neither wind nor wave, Thamus at the helm looked to land and repeated the words he had heard: 'Great Pan is dead.' He had no sooner done this than a great groaning was heard, proceeding not from one but from many, mingled with cries of wonder.

Demetrius told us that, among the islands near Britain, many were deserted and lay scattered (Sporades), some of them bearing the names of daemons and demigods. He himself, by the emperor's command, made a voyage of inquiry and observation to the nearest of the deserted islands, which had a few inhabitants, all sacred persons and never molested by the Britons. Just after his arrival, there was a great confusion in the atmosphere, many portents from the sky with gusts of wind and fiery blasts. When these calmed down, the islanders said that 'one of the mightier ones has ceased to be'. For as a lamp when lighted, so they explained, has no unpleasant effect, but when extinguished is disagreeable to many people, so it is with great souls: their kindling into life is easy and free from pain; their extinction and death often breed winds and tempests, 'such as you see now', and infect the air with pestilence and sickness.[1]

[1] *De oraculorum defectu*, c. 17 f., tr. Prickard.

The following passage gives a picture of the next world. It obviously owes much to Plato: but its ultimate ancestor is the Orphic teaching which, some 600 years before Plutarch's day, brought from Thrace doctrines of purification, rebirth, future rewards and punishments, kept its hold on the Greek mind, deeply coloured Christian eschatology, and gave a framework to the *Divina Commedia* of Dante.

THESPESIUS of Soli, after an early life of great profligacy, quickly ran through his fortune, changed his ways perforce, and took to the pursuit of wealth. He stopped at nothing disgraceful if it led to enjoyment or gain, and in a short time got together an inconsiderable fortune and a mighty reputation for evil. What hit him hardest was an answer delivered to him by the oracle of Amphilochus. It appears that he had sent to ask the god ' whether he will do better the rest of his life '. The answer was that he ' will live better when he has died '. And sure enough this, in a way, so fell out not long afterwards. He fell over from a high place upon his head; there was no wound, but he appeared to die of the mere blow, and on the third day, at the very time of the funeral, revived. He quickly recovered his strength, and came to himself, and the change of life which followed was incredible. For the Cilicians know of no man more fair in all business relations, or more holy in religious duties, so formidable a foe or so faithful a friend. This is what had happened to him. When sentience left his body, he felt affected by a change, as a helmsman might do when first plunged overboard into the depth of the sea; then, recovering a little, he seemed to himself to breathe all over and to look around, while his soul opened like one great eye. But he saw nothing of what he had been seeing before, only stars of vast size, at infinite distances from one another, each emitting a ray of marvellous colour and of a tonic force, so that the soul, riding smoothly on the light, as though over a calm sea, was carried easily and quickly in every direction. He said that the souls of those who die make a flame-like bubble where the air parts as they rise from below, then the bubble

quickly bursts, and they emerge with human form but light in bulk. Some bound forth with marvellous agility, and dart upwards in a straight line, while others whirl round together like spindles, now with an upward tendency, now a downward, which after a very long time is reduced to calm. Most of them he did not recognize, but seeing two or three persons of his acquaintance, he tried to approach them and speak. They would not hear him, and appeared not to be themselves, but to be distraught and scared out of their senses, shunning all sight or touch, while they roamed about, first by themselves; then they would meet and embrace others in like case, and whirl round in random indefinite figures of every sort, uttering unmeaning sounds, like cries of battle mingled with those of lamentation and terror. Others above, on the extremity of the firmament, were cheerful to behold, often drawing near to one another in kindness, and turning away from those other turbid souls. There he saw, he said, the soul of a kinsman which drew towards him, and said, 'Hail, Thespesius!' He was surprised at this, and said that his name was not Thespesius, but Aridaeus. 'Formerly so,' was the reply, 'but from now Thespesius. For you are not really dead, but have come hither with your sentient part; the rest of your soul is left within the body, as a light anchor. Let this be a sign to you now and hereafter; the souls of the dead make no shadow, and their eyes do not blink.' When Thespesius heard this, he drew himself together in deeper thought, and as he gazed, he saw a sort of dim and shadowy line which wavered as he moved, while the others were transparent within, all set around with brightness, yet not all equally. Some were like the full moon at her purest, and emitted one smooth, continuous, uniform colour; over others there ran scales, so to call them, or slender weals; others were quite dappled and strange to look upon, branded with black spots like those on serpents; others again showed open blunted scars. Then the kinsman of Thespesius began to explain it all to him, as thus: 'Adrasteia, daughter of Zeus and Necessity,

has been appointed to punish all crimes in the highest place ; no criminal has there ever yet been, so small or so great as to escape. But there are three modes of punishment, and each mode has its proper guardian minister. Some men are punished at once in the body and through their body, and these swift Retribution handles ; her method is a gentle one, and passes over many crimes which ask for expiation. Those whose cure is a heavier matter are passed after death to Justice by the daemon. The wholly incurable Justice rejects ; and these the third, and the fiercest, of the satellites of Adrasteia, whose name is Erinnys, chases, as they wander and try to escape in all directions ; and it is pitiful and cruel how she brings them all to nothing and plunges them into the gulf which is beyond speech or sight. Whoever makes his way here from earth unchastened and unpurged, Justice firmly seizes him, with his soul naked and manifest. And first she shows him to good parents, if such he has, or to ancestors, a contemptible and unworthy sight. If these are all bad, he sees them punished and is seen by them, and so is justified during a long time, while each of his passions is dislodged by pains and toils. Scars and weals left by particular passions are more persistent in some men than in others. And look,' he said, ' at those motley colours upon the souls, which come from every source. There is the dusky, dirty red, which is the smear made by meanness and greed ; the fiery blood-red of cruelty and harshness. Where you see the bluish grey, there intemperance in pleasures has been rubbed away, and a heavy work it was ; malice and envying have been there to inject that violet beneath the skin, as cuttle-fishes their ink. For down on earth vice brings out the colours, but here the final result of purgation and chastisement is this, that the soul becomes radiant all over and of one hue.' Having said this, he began to lead him on, covering, as it seemed, a space of infinite extent with unfaltering ease, borne upwards on the rays of light, as though by wings, until he reached a great chasm which yawned downwards. There he

was deserted by the supporting force, and saw the other souls in the same case. Packing together, like birds, and borne down and around, they circled about the chasm, which they did not venture to cross outright. You might see it within, resembling the caves of Bacchus, dressed in wood and greenery, and gay with blossoms of flowers of every sort ; and it exhaled a mild and gentle breeze which wafted odours of marvellous delight, and produced such an atmosphere as wine throws off for its votaries ; for the souls feasted on the fragrant smells and were relaxed into mutual kindliness. All around a bacchic humour prevailed, and laughter, and every joy which the Muses can give where men sport and are merry. Here he did not allow Thespesius to linger. Having travelled another journey as long as the first, he seemed to be gazing into a mighty bowl, with rivers discharging into it, one whiter than foam of the sea or snowflakes, another with the purple flush of the rainbow, others tinged with different hues. And there he saw three daemons seated close together in a triangle, mingling the streams in certain measures. He heard, as he passed, a woman's shrill voice chanting in verse many things, among them the time of his own death. The daemon told him that the voice was that of the Sibyl, who was singing about things to be, as she was carried round on the face of the moon. He desired to hear more, but was thrust off by the whirling of the moon to the opposite side, as though caught in the eddies, and only heard scraps, one of which was about Mount Vesuvius. After that, they turned to the sight of those under punishment. At first they met only with repulsive and piteous spectacles. Afterwards, when Thespesius found friends and relations and intimates, whom he could never have conceived of as punished, enduring sore sufferings and penalties both ignominious and painful, and pitying themselves to him and weeping aloud ; and at last saw his own father emerging from a certain pit, all over brands and scars, reaching out his hand towards his son and compelled by the warders to confess his infamous conduct to some strangers who

had come with gold—how he had poisoned them, and had escaped detection there on earth, but had been convicted here, how he had already suffered part, and was now led to suffer the remainder—, then he did not dare to supplicate or to entreat for his father, so great was his consternation and horror. Wishing to turn about and flee, he saw no longer that gracious and familiar guide, but was thrust forward by others of terrible visage, because it was necessary that he should go through it all. There he beheld the shadows of those who had been notoriously wicked, and who had been punished on the spot, not savagely handled as were the former ones, because their sin was one of passion. But those who had passed through life under a veil of seeming virtue were compelled by others, who stood around, laboriously and painfully to turn their soul inside out, writhing and bending themselves back unnaturally, as the scolopendrae of the sea, when they have gorged the hook, turn themselves inside out. Others they would flay, and fold the skin back, to show how scarred and mottled they were beneath it, because the vice was seated in the rational part. Other souls he said that he saw intertwined like vipers, by twos or threes or more together, gnawing one another out of spite and rancour for what they had suffered in life, or done. And there were lakes lying side by side, one of boiling gold, one of lead, exceeding cold, and one of iron, which was rough. Over these stood daemons, as it might be smiths, with tongs, picking up by turns the souls of those whose wickedness came of greed and grasping, and plunging them in. When they had become all fiery and transparent in the burning gold, they were thrust into the bath of lead ; and when frozen till they became hard as hailstones, they were shifted on to the iron, and there they became hideously black, and were broken up and crushed, so hard and brittle were they, and their shapes were changed. Then they were conveyed, just as they were, back to the gold, enduring dire pains in the transition. Most pitiful of all, he said, was the case of those who seemed already quit of Justice and then

were seized up anew. These were the souls whose penalty had come round to any descendants or children. For whenever any one of these last came up and met them, he would fall upon them in anger, and shout aloud, and show the marks of his sufferings, reviling and pursuing, while the parent soul sought to flee and hide itself, but could not. And there were some, he said, to whom a number of their offspring were attached, clinging to them like bees or bats, and gibbering in wrathful recollection of what they had suffered on account of their parents. Up to this point, Thespesius had been, he said, a spectator. But as he was about to return, he suffered a horrible fear. For a woman of marvellous form and stature seized hold of him : ' Come here,' she said, ' that thou mayst have a better memory of these things.' Then she brought near him a rod, such as painters use, red-hot, but another woman prevented her. He, sucked up by a sudden violent wind, as out of a blowpipe, fell on to his own body, and just opened his eyes on the edge of the tomb.[1]

I have given specimens of Plutarch's *Lives* in a companion volume.[2] The following extract is from his biography of the younger Cato, one of the chief leaders of the senatorial party in the last century of the Republic. It is given here as a picture of the Stoic in life and death. Creeds are best judged from their disciples, and the story of Cato shows how Stoicism shaped the life and character of a rich, aristocratic politician.

WHEN Cato received his share under his mother's will, amounting to about £30,000, he lived even more simply than before. He became a friend of Antipater of Tyre, a philosopher of the Stoic school, and adopted in particular their moral and political teaching. He was inspired by a passion for every kind of virtue, but his chief ideal was an

[1] *De sera numinum vindicta*, c. 22 f., tr. Prickard.
[2] *The Pageant of Greece.*

inflexible justice which neither influence nor clemency could bend. . . .

After mastering the art of public speaking he again withdrew into a life of silence and discipline. He trained his body by vigorous exercise, accustoming himself to endure heat and snow bareheaded, and to walk on foot at all seasons. The friends who travelled with him went on horseback, and Cato would join each in turn, talking and walking while they rode. He showed amazing endurance and self-control in illness. When he had a fever he admitted nobody, but lived by himself till he felt that his convalescence was assured and that the illness had passed.

He was elected tribune and sent to Macedonia under General Rubrius. When he joined the army, which consisted of several legions,[1] the general gave him the command of one. He saw nothing great or princely in displaying his own individual courage : it was his chief ambition to make his men like himself. Without relaxing the terrors of authority he associated reason with them. He used it on every occasion to persuade and instruct, accompanying it with honours or punishments, and made his men no less peaceable than warlike, no less energetic than just, so that they showed themselves formidable to the enemy, gentle to our allies, backward to injustice, ambitious of distinction, while Cato acquired in the fullest degree that for which he had least cared—glory, popularity, pre-eminent honour, and the affection of the army. He worked voluntarily at the tasks which he imposed on others. In dress, in daily life, on the march, he was more like a common soldier than an officer. In character, in spirit, in mind, he was superior to the titular generals and commanders-in-chief, and so without himself knowing it became the darling of his men. When his service ended the army not merely took leave of him with prayers and praises—which is common—but wept and embraced him and would not be satisfied. Wherever he went they spread

[1] A legion contained 6,000 men.

their clothes in his path and kissed his hands—honours rarely accorded by the Romans of those days to their commanders-in-chief.

Before entering political life he was anxious to travel and learn something of Asia Minor, and to see the life, habits, and resources of each province. The following was his method of travel. At dawn he sent his cook and baker in advance to the place where he intended to stay. They entered the town in question in an orderly and quiet way, and, if Cato had no friends or acquaintance there, prepared his reception at an inn, without inconveniencing any one. If there was no inn they applied to the magistrates and accepted contentedly the hospitality provided. As they employed neither bluster nor threats in their proceedings they were often disbelieved and ignored, and had to return to Cato without achieving their task. Still less attention was paid to Cato. His appearance, as he sat quietly on his luggage, gave the impression of a humble and timid individual. However, he used to summon the magistrates and say: Rascals, change your inhospitable ways. All your visitors will not be Catos. Blunt by courtesy the sharp edge of the authority of those who only desire an excuse to take by force what has not been willingly given.

Deiotarus, the King of Galatia, sent for Cato. He was old and wished to put his children and house under Cato's protection. When Cato came the king offered him all sorts of presents, but his entreaties and persuasions so irritated Cato, that arriving in the evening he left about 9 a.m. on the following day. After a day's journey he found even greater presents waiting for him in Pessinus with a letter from the king begging him to accept them, or, if he did not wish this, to allow his friends to do so; they deserved some gratification for his sake, and Cato's private means were not sufficient to provide it. But Cato would not assent even to this, though he saw some of his friends weakening and privately criticizing him. Declaring that bribery would never lack a pretext and that his friends should share

all the wealth that he had honourably and justly acquired, he sent the presents back to Deiotarus.

When he returned to Rome he spent his time at home in the company of the Stoic philosopher Athenodorus or in the forum helping his friends. The quaestorship [1] shortly after fell to him, but he did not take it up till he had studied the Treasury laws, and had questioned the experts on details and got a general grasp of the functions of the office.

As a result, on taking office, he made great changes in the Treasury officials and clerks. While the Ministers were new, and owing to want of experience and knowledge needed the guidance and tuition of others, these officials had a long and intimate acquaintance with the laws and the public records, and instead of resigning the power to the Ministers kept it for themselves ; until Cato applied himself vigorously to the work, became Minister not merely in title and honour, but also in mind, temper, and position, and determined to employ the officials in their true position of subordinates. He exposed their malpractices, and corrected their blunders. When they showed a bold front, tried to flatter his colleagues by subservience, and displayed hostility to him, he convicted the principal official of a breach of trust in an inheritance and dismissed him from the Treasury.

His persistent and unwearying care won the hearts of the people. He was the first of the Ministers to arrive at the Treasury, the last to leave it. He never missed a meeting of the Assembly or the Senate, and kept a careful watch on lax or corrupt proposals for remissions of debts or taxes or for casual gifts of state money. He filled the coffers of the Treasury, yet closed its doors to informers, and showed that a state might be rich without injustice. At first some of his fellow Ministers found him harsh and difficult, later he won their affection by accepting alone the unpopularity due to his not being free with public money or unjust in his decisions ; besides, he allowed

[1] = our Lord of the Treasury.

them when pressed by applicants to say that they could not grant their requests against Cato's will.

On the day of his expiry of office the greater part of Rome had escorted him home, when he heard that Marcellus had been approached at the Treasury by a number of powerful friends, who were besieging him and trying to compel him to cancel a debt to the state. Marcellus was a friend of Cato's childhood, and while in his company had been the best of his colleagues ; but, when alone, he was ashamed to refuse suitors and prone to do any one a kindness. Cato at once returned, and finding that Marcellus had been pressed into cancelling the debt asked for the documents and erased the grant, while Marcellus stood by in silence. After doing this Cato brought him out of the Treasury and took him home. Marcellus never blamed him at the time or later, but continued through all his intimate friend.

Cato was the first to arrive at the Senate, the last to leave. Often when the other members were slow in assembling he would sit down and read quietly, holding the book under his cloak. He never left Rome during the session. Later, when Pompey's supporters found him invariably difficult to persuade or coerce into supporting their iniquitous aims, they planned to draw him away on the plea of acting as advocate to a friend, or as arbitrator, or on other business. He quickly saw through their plot, refused all invitations and made a point of taking no outside business while the Senate was sitting. He had not taken to public life, like some others, casually or automatically or for the sake of fame or personal advantage. He chose it because it was the function proper to a good man, and he thought it his duty to pay more attention to the interests of the state than a bee pays to the comb. Once when the demagogue Clodius was stirring up the beginning of a revolution, and slandering publicly the priests and priestesses (among them Cicero's sister-in-law), Cato opposed him to his own risk. He overwhelmed Clodius with disgrace and forced him to leave

Rome. When Cicero thanked him Cato said that he must thank Rome, implying that his actions and policy were ruled by public interest.

In consequence Cato gained a great reputation, so that it became a common proverb to say about incredible or unlikely things, that one could not believe it, even if Cato said so.

The people at that time were corrupted by bribes from those who were anxious for office, and made the sale of votes a regular trade. Cato wished completely to eradicate this disease from the state, and persuaded the Senate to pass a resolution that those who were elected to office, even if no one accused them, should be compelled to come into court and give an account of their actions on oath. This was very unpopular with candidates for office, and still more so with the masses who took bribes. One morning when Cato came forward to the tribune they attacked him in a body with shouts, abuse, and missiles. Every one fled and Cato, pushed and jostled by the mob, had difficulty in reaching the platform. He took his stand there, and by the boldness and confidence of his looks mastered the tumult and silenced the shouting. He made a suitable speech, which was listened to quietly, and completely stopped the riot. When the Senate commended him he said: I on the contrary cannot commend you for abandoning the consul and failing to help him in his danger. Meanwhile the candidates were in great perplexity. Each was afraid to give bribes, but equally afraid that they would fail to be elected, if the other candidates did so. So they met and determined each to deposit £1,000, and then to canvass fairly and honestly, on the understanding that any one who broke the compact and gave bribes should lose his deposit. After making this agreement they chose Cato to hold the stakes and arbitrate, and deposited the money with him.

Among his friends and admirers was M. Favonius, who was elected aedile.[1] Cato assisted him in his official duties and

[1] Something like our Commissioner of Public Works.

managed his theatrical shows, giving the actors wild olive crowns, as at the Olympic games, instead of golden ones. Instead of expensive prizes he gave to the Greeks beet-root, lettuces, radishes, and pears, to the Romans small jars of wine, pork, figs, cucumbers, and faggots. Some ridiculed the economy, others respected this mild relaxation of his usual stiff and austere attitude. Meanwhile Curio, the colleague of Favonius, was giving an elaborate entertainment in another theatre. But his audience deserted him and went over to the theatre of Favonius. Cato's object in this behaviour was to disparage the custom, and show that amusement should simply be amusement, a matter of modest pleasure and not of elaborate and expensive arrangements, in which men devoted much thought and trouble to trifles.

When the Civil War came, Cato, while fighting to the end for the Republic, threw his influence on the side of moderation, mercy, and such legality as war permits.

FROM the days when war broke out, he is said never to have cut his hair or his beard or to have worn a garland, but to have maintained to the end the same attitude of sorrow, dejection, and depression over the misfortunes of his country, alike in the day of victory and of defeat. When he joined Pompey he always persisted in one policy—to gain time: he hoped for reconciliation and he was anxious to avoid the injuries which Rome must suffer from a struggle and the self-inflicted disaster of an appeal to the sword. Consistently with this he persuaded Pompey and the Council to decree that no city in the Roman Empire should be sacked and no Roman be killed except in pitched battle. He carried his proposal and brought over to Pompey's side many who welcomed his humane and reasonable temper. When Caesar was defeated at Durazzo all the Pompeians were delighted and magnified their success, but Cato lamented for his country and deplored the disastrous and fatal ambition which brought so many brave Romans to death at their countrymen's hands.

On Pompey's death Cato maintained the struggle in Africa, with his head-quarters at the Carthaginian city of Utica. When Caesar finally defeated the senatorial forces at Thapsus, Cato devoted himself to securing a safe retreat for the Senators at Utica, whom the local Council of Three Hundred (composed of Roman traders and settlers) wished to surrender to Caesar, in order to appease him.

NEVER had the goodness of Cato been so apparent, never had the total absence from his actions of any false or unreal element excited such admiration and affection. He had long determined to take his own life, yet he was going to extreme pains of thought and effort for others, in order that he might secure everybody's safety before his death. He was clearly bent on this, though he did not admit it. After encouraging the local senate he complied with the request of the Roman Council, and came to them unattended. They expressed their gratitude to him and begged him to trust and make use of them for the future. They asked him to be indulgent with their weakness if they were not Catos, or capable of the spirit of a Cato. They had decided to send to Caesar and beg his pardon, and to make their first condition the pardon of Cato. If they failed to persuade Caesar they would not accept his clemency if it was offered to themselves, but would fight for Cato as long as they had breath in their bodies. Cato praised their friendly spirit and said that they should communicate with Caesar as quickly as possible in their own interests, but that they were to make no requests for him. Requests were for the defeated, apologies for offenders. He had not only been undefeated all his life, but he was victorious as far as he wished to be, and in honour and justice he was Caesar's master.

It became clear that if Cato wished to continue the struggle against Caesar his side would not. Cato agreed that they should make the best terms possible for themselves, and resolved to take the path out of a hopeless situation which in the last resort Stoicism sanctioned.

CATO returned home, and collecting his son and his friends had a long conversation with them, in which he forbade his son to engage in politics. Circumstances, he said, will not allow you to follow in them a course worthy of Cato, and any other course is dishonourable. Towards evening he went to the bath, and then to supper, at which he sat [1] at table. For this had been his custom since Philippi ; [2] he had not lain down except to sleep. All his friends dined with him, and also the magistrates of Utica.

After supper the wine produced much agreeable and literary conversation, and a series of philosophical questions were canvassed, until the discussion turned on the so-called Stoic paradoxes, that only the good are free and that all bad men are slaves. The Aristotelian, as was to be expected, opposed this view, when Cato violently attacked him and in high and harsh tones made a very long speech. His vehemence was surprising ; every one saw that he had determined to escape from his situation by ending his life, and his speech was followed by general silence and depression. Then Cato, to rally the company and divert their suspicions, raised some of the problems and anxieties of their position, professing to be afraid about the men at sea and those who were travelling through a wild and waterless desert.

In this way he broke up the company, and, after taking his usual after-dinner walk with his friends and giving the necessary instructions to the officers of the guard, went to his room. Suspicions of what was coming were again aroused by the unusual affection with which he embraced his son and each of his friends. He retired, lay down and took up Plato's dialogue on the soul,[3] and after reading the greater part of it looked up. Not seeing his sword hanging above his head—his son had

[1] Romans usually reclined at meals.

[2] The battle in which Pompey and the senatorial army had been defeated.

[3] The *Phaedo*.

removed it during dinner—he called a servant, and asked him who had taken it. There was no answer, and he resumed his book: then after an interval, with no sign of haste or hurry, but as if he was casually looking for it, he told the slave to bring the sword. Time passed and no one brought it, and Cato read the book to the end. Then he called his slaves one by one, and in a louder voice demanded the weapon. He struck one of them in the mouth with his fist, and covered his hand with blood. By now he was angry and exclaimed loudly that his son and servants were betraying him unarmed to the enemy, till his son ran in with his friends, and falling at Cato's feet implored him with tears. But Cato rose and with a terrible look said, When and where have you found me out of my senses, that no one remonstrates with me or tries to argue me out of my supposed error, but I am to be disarmed and prevented from using my own reason? Why do not you put your father in chains, sir, and tie my hands behind my back, till Caesar comes and finds me incapable even of self-defence? I need no sword to take my life: I have only to hold my breath for a short time or to knock my head once upon the wall.

At these words his son and the others left the room in tears, and Cato continued in a milder tone to Demetrius and Apollonides, who remained: Have you too determined to keep a man of my age alive by force, and to sit here and watch me in silence? Or have you come to prove to me that there is nothing terrible or disgraceful in Cato, since he has no other hope of safety, expecting it at his enemy's hands? If so, speak and convert me to abandoning the old views and convictions in which I have lived. Convert me to allowing Caesar to make me wiser and more indebted to him. In fact I have not come to any decision about myself, though, when I have done so, I wish to be in a position to carry it out. In a sense I shall take your advice, at least I shall take the advice of the doctrines which your philosophy teaches. So leave me with a good heart, and

tell my son not to use force on his father where he cannot persuade him.

They made no reply, but left the room in tears. Cato had the sword brought him by a small boy, and having got it drew and examined it. Seeing that the point was sharp and that the edge was in good condition, he said, Now I am my own master; then he laid the sword down and again took the book. He is said to have read it through twice; then he fell into a sleep so sound that those outside heard him. At midnight he called his doctor, the freedman Cleanthes, and Butas, who was his right hand in political matters. He sent the latter to the sea, to ascertain if all his friends had sailed and bring back word, while he got the doctor to bandage his hand, which was inflamed by the blow which he had given the servant. This made every one easier, for they took it as a sign that he meant to live. Shortly afterwards Butas returned with the news that every one had sailed except Crassus, who had been detained by some business, but that he was just going on board, and that there was a high wind and a great storm at sea. On hearing this Cato sighed out of pity for those at sea, and sent Butas back to the harbour. Now the birds were beginning to sing, and Cato again fell into a light sleep. On the return of Butas, he told him to shut the door, and lay down on his bed, as though he meant to sleep for the rest of the night. But when Butas had left he drew his sword and drove it into his breast. Owing to his inflamed hand the blow was unsteady, and did not immediately take effect: he fell off the bed in his struggling and made a noise by knocking down a mathematical calculating board that stood near. His servants heard it and shouted out, and his son and friends at once rushed in. Seeing him in a pool of blood but still alive they were in a terrible state; the doctor came in and tried to stitch up the wound. But Cato, recovering consciousness and seeing their intention, pushed the doctor away, tore out the stitches, and expired.

The following are from Plutarch's endless store of anecdotes:

WHEN some one asked the elder Dionysius if he had any leisure he replied, Heaven forbid that I ever should.

It was a neat answer made by the Egyptian to the man who asked him what he was carrying in a wrapper: That is why it is in a wrapper.

When King Lysimachus asked the comic poet Philippides, What can I give you of all that I have? he wisely replied, Anything, sire, except your secrets.

When Philip wrote to the Spartans, If I enter your country I will turn you out, they wrote back: If.

Thrasyllus the Cynic asked Antigonus for a shilling. That, said Antigonus, is too little for a king to give. Then give me a talent (£240), said Thrasyllus. That, replied the king, is too much for a Cynic to receive.

A man from the small island of Seriphus said to Themistocles that he was famous not for his own merits but because he was an Athenian. Yes, said Themistocles: I should not have been famous if I had come from Seriphus, nor would you if you had come from Athens.

Lamachus rebuked an officer for a mistake. When the officer said that he would not do it a second time Lamachus said: In war there is no second time.

Chabrias used to say that an army of stags led by a lion was more formidable than an army of lions led by a stag.

When the allies asked Archidamus in the Peloponnesian war to fix a regular quota of tribute he declined, saying: War has a very irregular appetite.

When asked about the size of the Spartan army, Agis said: If you saw them fight you would think them numerous.

When blamed for employing stratagems Lysander said: Gaps in the lion's skin must be pieced from a fox.

When Paedaretus was not elected to the Three Hundred he

went away with a cheerful smile, saying that he was glad that the city had 300 citizens better than himself.

When Archidamus saw a new war engine shooting a missile he said : It is all over with human courage.

Agesilaus was urged to hear a man who imitated a nightingale. No, thank you, he answered ; I have heard a nightingale.

VIII

A POPULAR PREACHER : MAXIMUS TYRIUS

We have forty-one lectures by Maximus Tyrius. It might be supposed that they would throw some light on his life ; characteristically, they throw none, and we know nothing of him except that he lived in the reign of Commodus (A. D. 180–192). His lectures belong to a recognized type of contemporary literature and deal with such subjects as *Should we erect statues to God ? Have poets or philosophers formed juster conceptions of God ? Should we wrong those who wrong us ? Does education make men morally better ? On the Platonic idea of Love. Is the life of thought better than the life of action ? Are farmers or soldiers more useful to a state ?* Sometimes, as in the last two instances, he puts the opposite views in successive discourses.

From these lectures we can form our opinion of the ideals, the sincerity, and the intellectual powers not only of the author, but also of the popular educated audiences to which they were delivered. Their value and quality may be estimated by comparing them with the similar writings of Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom. An unfavourable critic might say that the subjects are often profound, but that they are always treated without profundity. The ideas are borrowed from others. Plato more than any one formed the mind of Maximus, whose frequent method is to take a Platonic idea and draw it out till the threads wear thin. The style is easy and pleasant, but the antitheses and parallelisms are a little overdriven and give the speeches at times a machine-made character. Maximus called himself a philosopher : we should call him a popular preacher. The nearest modern parallel to the lectures is a sermon. The audiences which listened to them have their counterparts to-day in the rich or fashionable congregations of London, Paris, Berlin, and New York. The quotations from well-established poets, the embroidery of metaphor and illustration, the edifying and undogmatic idealism are familiar. It would doubtless be unfair to compare the author to the Rev. Charles Honeyman : [1] yet he has

[1] See Thackeray, *The Newcomes*, chap. xi.

something in common with him. But the sincerity of Maximus is of a higher order. He is not indeed sincere in the sense in which Epictetus or Dion or Plutarch are sincere. He belongs rather to the dubious light of that middle world where so many politicians, journalists, and popular preachers wander. But his chief interest lies less in himself and his thought, than in the light which he throws on his generation, on their spiritual and intellectual quality, and on the ideas which they were ready to take as opiates or as medicines for the soul. In the following pages the reader can decide if I have judged him too severely.

Those who wish to test the metal of which the following discourse is composed should compare it with Epictetus' treatment of the same subject.[1] It is the familiar cry of a sophisticated age; the hearers of Maximus saw the weaknesses of their civilization depicted, and no doubt after sighing with him returned to it.

Is the Cynic's Life to be preferred?[2]

I WANT to tell you a story in the manner of Aesop. My speakers will not be a lion or an eagle or things still less vocal, such as oaks, but this is how I shall tell my tale. Zeus, the heavens, and the earth existed. The gods were citizens of the sky. But earth's children, men, had not yet seen the light of day. Zeus summoned Prometheus and directed him to colonize earth with two-footed creatures. Their minds, he said, are to be closely allied with ours, their bodies slight, upright, symmetrical, their looks mild, their hands apt to labour, their steps firm. Prometheus obeyed, created men and colonized the earth. When they came into being, men lived easy lives. The earth gave them sufficient food, deep meadows, leafy mountains, an abundance of fruits, all that she loves to bear when untroubled by the farmer's hand. The nymphs gave them clear fountains, transparent rivers, a rich and generous variety of waters. Their limbs were lapped in the temperate and comforting warmth of the sun; in summer the winds blowing off

[1] p. 56 f. The doctrine is, of course, Cynic, and a commonplace of contemporary philosophy. See p. 32 f.

[2] *Or.* 36.

the streams refreshed their frame: and in the lavish and natural abundance of their life none of these was a subject of strife. The poets seem to come closest to this fable of mine with their hints of such a life under Cronos, king of heaven, a life free from war, iron, competition, need, a life of health and peace; and Hesiod, I fancy, calls this people the race of gold, with a slap at us.

And now farewell to my fable. It shall turn from a fable into a regular discourse, and proceed to compare age with age, the first age with the second or iron age—or whatever else you like to call it—when men divided up the earth, each carving out his different portion of it, surrounding themselves with walls and barricades, swathing their bodies in soft wrappings, fortifying their feet with leather, hanging neck or head or finger with gold—a fetter of beauty and respectability. They built houses and added locks and courtyards and porticoes. They vexed the earth with mining, digging and delving. They did not leave the sea itself alone, but besieged even that with vessels of war and travel and traffic. They did not spare even the air: that too they plundered, and netted the flocks of birds with lime and snare and manifold engines. They did not spare tame animals because they were weak, or wild ones because they were formidable, but glutted their bellies with blood and gore and every form of death. Always exploring some novelty of pleasure, and indifferent to yesterday's delights; pursuing joy and finding pain; eager for wealth, and always rating their gains below their expectations and their possessions below what they did not possess; afraid of indigence and unable to be satisfied; dreading death but indifferent to life; afraid of ill health and indulging in unhealthy things; suspicious of others and always plotting; formidable to the defenceless and timid before the armed; haters of despotism and desirous to practise it; critical of disgraceful actions and guilty of them; admirers of prosperity but not of virtue; pitying misfortune, but not avoiding misery;

audacious in success, incompetent [1] in failure ; greedy of life while they call the dead happy ; censuring war and incapable of peace ; abject in servitude and rash in freedom ; uncontrolled in democracy and timid in despotism ; eager for children and indifferent when they had them ; praying to God as though He could help them and despising Him as though He could not ; afraid of His punishments and perjuring themselves as though He did not exist.

This noble many-sided life I shall compare to a noisome prison where unhappy mortals are confined in a dark corner, their feet loaded with iron, a heavy collar round their necks and grievous fetters on their hands, foul, half-strangled, groaning. With time and habit they come to devise alleviations in their prison life ; sometimes they get drunk, sing confusedly, and indulge in the pleasures of food and love, though fear and mistrust and the thought of their misery do not allow them quietly to sate themselves : and you can hear in each prison chamber

Weeping and song and groans and cries of Paean.[2]

The other life I should compare to that of men who live in a clear light, with hands and feet unbound, able to turn their heads in any direction, raising their eyes to the risen sun and seeing the stars, distinguishing night from day, waiting on the seasons, feeling the breeze, inhaling a free and fresh air. They have neither the chains of those prisoners nor their delights, neither drunkenness nor sexual pleasure nor gluttony nor weeping nor cries of Paean nor songs nor sobs nor satiety—only the plain existence of a delicate and refined palate. Which of these pictures shall we approve, which life shall we pity, which shall we choose ? The prison life with its confusion, its uncertainty, its bait of bitter and pitiable pleasures,

Where was wailing of men and praying ?

Nay, poor soul ; not so.

[1] Reading *ἀνάκλητοι*, which is a military metaphor—' dug out '.

[2] A reminiscence of Sophocles, *O. T.* 4. The metaphor is borrowed from ' the cave ' in Plato's *Republic*.

But leave these pictures with their fables, and pass to a man who did not live in the primeval reign of Cronos, but in the midst of our iron generation, a man whom Zeus and Apollo set free. He was not an Athenian or Dorian. Solon did not train nor Lycurgus bring him up—neither locality nor laws elect the virtues. He came from Sinope on the Black Sea. Taking counsel of Apollo he freed himself from all adversity, divested himself of its fetters, and roamed the world at liberty, like a bird endowed with reason. He feared no tyrant, knew no compulsion of law. Civic duty did not engage, nor family impede, nor marriage confine, nor agriculture detain, nor military service disturb, nor commerce distract him. He laughed at all such lives and men, as we laugh at little children when we see them engrossed over a game of knuckle-bones, exchanging blows and robbing each other. He lived the life of a free and fearless king. Temples and gymnasia and sacred groves were his palaces. All earth and her fruits and the streams, her offspring, more profuse than any Lesbian or Chian vintage, were his abundant, secure, and undisputed wealth. Like a lion, he was the intimate and darling of the air. He did not evade God's seasons or make contrivances against Him by devising artificial heat in winter, or in summer longing for coolness. So habituated was he to the nature of the universe that this life made him sound and strong, and he reached an extreme old age, without needing medicine, cautery, the surgeon's knife, the prophet's prophecies, the priest's purifications, the wizard's charm. Greece was at war : each state attacked its neighbour,

Who of old met in melancholy war.

He alone kept truce, unarmed in a world of arms, confederate with all those fighters. The criminal, the despot, the slanderer left him alone. He confounded the wicked, not with verbal quibbles, the most wretched form of confutation, but with the contrast of deeds, the most profitable and peaceful of argu-

ments. That is why no Meletus or Aristophanes or Anytus or Lycon [1] ever attacked Diogenes.

Must not the life of Diogenes stand first—chosen by himself, given by Apollo, applauded by Zeus, admired by the wise? And how can we define adversity better than as the leading of a life not of our choosing?

Ask the married man why he marries: 'For children' is his reply. Ask a man with children why he brought them into the world: he wants to leave descendants. So you will find that the farmer's desire is for crops, the merchant's for good trade, the politician's for honour. Most of these desires are abortive and end in their opposite, and success is the work of chance rather than of judgement or skill. Each of the men who make these choices leads a life of adversity, and endures unhappiness which was involuntary and did not arise from ignorance of eligible good. Which of them can be called free? The demagogue is the servant of many tyrants; the orator, of harsh judges; the despot, of intemperate pleasures; the general, of obscure fortune; the sailor, of uncertain skill; the philosopher—which philosopher? I admire Socrates, but I hear him saying, 'I obey the law, and I will go voluntarily to prison, and voluntarily take the poison.' Ah, Socrates! Was it voluntary? Or are you taking up an impressive attitude in the face of involuntary misfortune? 'I obey the law?' If it was God's law, I applaud the lawgiver; but if it was Solon's, how was Solon better than Socrates? Let Plato too answer for philosophy, and say if nothing troubled his creed—for instance, the exile of Dion, the threats of Dionysius and those Ionian and Sicilian seas over which he sailed up and down.[2] Passing to Xenophon, we find his life too full of wandering and doubtful fortunes and forced campaigns and involuntary leadership and a colourable exile. So I say that these crises were avoided by

[1] The enemies of Socrates.

[2] The allusion is to Plato's experiences when he attempted to convert Dionysius, prince of Syracuse, to philosophic ideals.

that life, which raised Diogenes higher than Lycurgus, Solon, Artaxerxes, or Alexander, and made him more free than Socrates himself; for he was impeached before no court, cast into no prison, nor won his renown from his misfortunes.

The following speech treats, with more feeling than thought, a commonplace of the pulpit in all ages.

Should one pray? [1]

A PHRYGIAN,[2] an idle fellow with a love of money, caught a Satyr, according to the fable, by mixing wine with the spring, where the Satyr used to go and drink when thirsty. The foolish Phrygian prayed to the captive deity, and prayed the kind of prayer which the man was likely to make and the Satyr to fulfil, that his land might become golden, and his trees golden, and his tillage and meadows and their flowers. The Satyr granted his request; but when the land had turned to gold, famine attacked Phrygia, and Midas lamented his wealth, recanted his prayer, and begged—not the Satyr, but the gods and goddesses—that his ancient poverty, with its rich and varied fertility and fruitfulness, might return, and his gold be launched on to the heads of his enemies. So he prayed with lamentation, but for all that his prayer was not granted.

I admire the grace of the story and its path towards truth. For what is its hidden meaning, but a fool's prayer for something worthless, praying to obtain, and repenting when he obtains? The capture of the Satyr, the bonds, and the wine indicate that those who by deceit or even violence achieve their desires (rather than their prayers) ascribe to heaven a gift which heaven never gave: for God bestows nothing but what is good. Such things are the gift of chance, the irrational gift of an irrational power, like the benevolence of a drunken man.

[1] *Or.* 5. [2] Midas.

Maximus then mentions other instances of wrong or foolish prayers, including some from Homer.

WHAT is the meaning of these stories, best of poets ? [1] Is God a greedy creature whom we can bribe, no better than the mass of mankind ? And shall we accept your saying, ' The gods themselves can be bent ' ? Or on the contrary is divinity unbending, unwavering, inexorable ? To change one's decisions and dispositions is no mark of a good man, much less of God. If one who bends and changes makes his change for the better, his original purpose was bad : if he changes from the best to the worse, the change was bad : [2] and divinity is remote from evil. Again, the man who prays was either worthy or unworthy to obtain his desire. If he is worthy, he will obtain it without prayer ; if unworthy, he will not obtain it even by prayer. The deserving, who omit to pray, do not thereby become undeserving, nor do the undeserving, who pray, become therefore deserving. On the contrary he who is worthy to receive is all the more worthy, because he does not trouble God ; and he who is unworthy is all the more so because he troubles Him. We must attribute courage and modesty to the former, for his courage makes him believe that he will obtain, and his modesty keeps him silent even though he should not, and ignorance and wickedness to the latter, for his ignorance makes him pray and his wickedness makes him unworthy to receive. Suppose God were a general, and some person fit for the baggage train requested of Him a position in the ranks, while another suitable for armed service held his tongue. Would God not decide according to the needs of the service, and permit the one to act as a bearer while He assigned the other to the ranks ? Yet a general might be ignorant of the facts, or be deceived or bribed. But that is not the character of God. He will not give to prayer contrary to merit, nor fail to give to those who deserve but do not pray.

[1] Homer. From Plato.

And then the objects of human prayer are either subject to the control of Providence, or to the constraint of Fate, or to the shifts of Fortune, or to the management of Art. Providence is the work of God, Fate the work of necessity, Art the work of Man, Fortune the work of Chance. To one or other of these the stuff of life, and therefore the objects of our prayers, are assigned. But if they are in the realm of Providence, what need of prayer? For if God exercises Providence, either He exercises it over the whole and is indifferent to the part—as kings preserve their states by law and justice but do not extend their care to the individual,—or else His providence is exhibited in individual cases. What shall we say? Do you hold that God exercises Providence for the whole? Then you must not trouble Him. He will not listen if you ask for something contrary to the interests of the whole. Suppose the members of the body could speak, when one of them was suffering from the surgeon's knife in the interests of the whole, should it implore surgery not to destroy it? And will not Asclepius [1] reply, 'Wretched creatures, the whole body is not to perish in your individual interest: you must die that it may live'? So too with the universe. There is a plague in Athens, an earthquake in Sparta, floods in Thessaly, an eruption on Aetna. You call their dissolution destruction. But the doctor knows the cause, ignores the prayers of the parts, and saves the whole: it is the whole for which he cares. But, you say, God also exercises His providence for the parts. May we then not pray here? Why, that is like an invalid asking a doctor for a medicine or a food. If it is any help the doctor will give it unasked; if it is dangerous, though asked he will not give it. So in the realm which Providence controls we should make no requests, no prayers.

Maximus then points out that it is equally useless to pray for things in the realm either of Fate, which no one can alter, or of Fortune, which is arbitrary and irrational.

[1] God of healing.

THERE remains Art. But what carpenter, master of his art, will pray about the beauty of a plough? What weaver, master of his art, about the beauty of a mantle? What smith, master of his art, about the beauty of a shield? What hero, master of courage, will pray for fortitude? What good man, master of virtue, will pray for happiness?

Very well. What object of prayer is there which is not subject to either Providence, Fate, Fortune, or Art? Is your request for money? Do not trouble God; it is not a good thing for which you are asking. Do not trouble Fate; money is not necessary. Do not trouble Fortune; she does not give in answer to prayer. Do not trouble Art; for you remember Menander's words:

Sordid is Art's old age,
Unless she find an avaricious lord.[1]

No, my honest friend, change your methods, say your prayers to Iniquity, set to work. You win 'wealth and worry' by keeping a brothel or a ship, by robbery or villany, by informing, by giving false evidence, by taking bribes. Is your request for victory? A mercenary will win it for you in war, an informer will procure it in a court of justice. Is it for trade? Trade is the gift of ships and the sea and the sweep of the winds: markets are at your command: it is a thing you can buy. Why trouble heaven? Do not be afraid of any unworthy conduct, and you will become rich, though you be Hipponicus,[2] victorious, though you be Cleon, successful in the law-court, though you be Meletus. But if you have recourse to prayer to God, you will find yourself before an exact and inexorable judge: no god will tolerate your praying improper prayers or give you what he should not give. A severe examiner and auditor

[1] The meaning apparently is that the arts in themselves are not lucrative, but need a patron.

[2] A fraudulent aristocrat. Meletus was the accuser of Socrates; Cleon, the Athenian demagogue, to whose unexpected success as a general allusion is here made.

presides over the individual's prayers, and regulates your requests by the rule of your interests. You will not manage him by bringing your desires before his court with pathetic words, with cries of ' Pity ', with clouds of dust poured on your head, and, perhaps, with reproaches, such as

If e'er with wreaths I hung your sacred shrine.[1]

But God says : Is the object of your prayer good ? Receive it, if you are deserving. If you are that, you need no prayer : you shall receive, though you hold your tongue.

' But ', you say, ' Socrates went to the Piraeus to pray,[2] and urged men to do it, and his whole life was full of prayer.' Yes, and Pythagoras, and Plato, and all who have been intimate with heaven, have prayed. But whereas you think that the philosopher's prayer was a request for things which he had not, I think that it was a communion and conversation with God about what he had and a revelation of His goodness. Do you suppose that Socrates prayed for money or for control of Athens ? A thousand times, no. He asked in prayer from God, but received from himself, with God's assent, spiritual goodness, peace of life, a blameless existence, a death full of hope, wonderful gifts, the gifts of heaven. If a man asks the earth for a prosperous voyage, the sea for a rich harvest ; if he asks a weaver for a plough and a carpenter for a mantle, he will retire without obtaining his gift and his request.

Zeus, Athena, and Apollo, overseers of the characters of men, you need philosophers as pupils to receive your art with strong souls and reap a noble and happy harvest of life. But this kind of husbandry is rare ; it grows with difficulty and comes late. Yet life needs this rare and scanty spark, that reveals itself at various times and in different men, like a tiny light in profound darkness. For beauty is not abundant in human nature,

[1] From Homer. The words with which the priest of Apollo begs the god to avenge him.

[2] A reminiscence of Plato, *Republic*, 327.

yet this slight element preserves the world. Take philosophy from life, and you take its fire, its breath, its vitality, all in it that knows how to pray: just as by taking the life from a body you deprive it of motion, by taking the fruits from the earth you mutilate it, by taking the sun from the day you quench its light.

IX

A THEOSOPHIST: APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

PHILOSTRATUS wrote a life of Apollonius of Tyana, chiefly from some memoirs entrusted to him by the wife of the Emperor Severus (A. D. 193–211), the literary Julia Domna. This life shows us a vagrant philosopher, vegetarian, teetotal, celibate, barefoot, long-haired, linen-clad (dress or food made from an animal were equally abhorrent to him). He wanders over the world, through Asia Minor to Babylon, where he speaks with the Magi, and thence to India, where he visits a Brahman monastery. He travels up the Nile to talk with the Gymnosophists or Naked Philosophers of Aethiopia. He is found in Rome, Athens, and Ephesus, in Spain and Sicily. He converses with the Kings of Parthia and India, with the emperors Vespasian, Titus, and Nerva. He is brought before Nero's prefect Tigellinus and finally tried for treason before Domitian, from whose tribunal he miraculously vanishes and appears to two disconsolate disciples at Puteoli. He performs miracles, foretells the future, and raises a woman from the dead in circumstances that curiously recall the raising of the widow's son at Nain. He despises wealth, power, and all material goods: he discourses on elephants, maternal love in animals, fables, painting, sorcerers, flute playing; he denounces hunting, animal sacrifice, and gladiatorial shows, abounds in remarks that are edifying, if not profound, and preaches a Hellenism reconciled and combined with the wisdom of the East. The correct label for him is 'Neo-Pythagorean'. He gathers disciples round him. Some doubt whether he died at all; one story tells that he vanished mysteriously in a temple amid the chanting of virgins, later reappearing to convince a disbeliever in immortality. After death he is honoured with temples.

It is uncertain what foundation of fact underlies this airy construction. But Apollonius, though unmentioned by any contemporary, seems really to have taught and preached a higher and more spiritual life to the paganism of the first century. No one can quarrel with the doctrine of the one

certain fragment from his writings that we possess,[1] nor need we necessarily hold him responsible for the fictions which piety, mendacity, and literary art assembled round his name. Indeed, he can never have dreamed of his future fortunes and fame. Philostratus, less interested in the teaching of Apollonius than in a romantic subject for literary treatment, made the best of his opportunity, freely ransacking geographers and historians for local colour. An ungrateful posterity has requited this pious work by either denying that Apollonius existed or labelling him a quack, by doubting whether he ever visited the India which Philostratus so picturesquely paints, and by pointing out that Babylon, where Apollonius is entertained by the Parthian king, was at that time in ruins. Contemporaries were less critical, and in subsequent centuries Apollonius with his miracles, prophecies, theosophy, and moralizing was put forward by dying paganism as a rival to Christ.[2] To-day we may see in Apollonius what Eusebius saw, 'a good man and a philosopher', and in his life by Philostratus, an entertaining novel by an author with a gift for literature and romance. But this novel is also an important religious document, revealing the contemporary tendency to combine with Hellenism Eastern religious ideas (e. g. asceticism, sun-worship, magic, daemons). Note how much farther this tendency, already visible in Plutarch, has gone in Philostratus.

Early Life of Apollonius

HE spent the period of silence partly in Pamphylia and partly in Cilicia; he travelled amongst those licentious races and never spoke a word anywhere, never allowed himself so much as to utter a sound. If he found a city in the turmoil of faction (there were disturbances in many of them about trivial spectacles) he had but to advance and show himself, and perhaps by hand or countenance give some indication of the intended rebuke—and all disorders would disappear and

[1] See p. 212.

[2] Phillimore, from whose brilliant translation of Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius* (in the Oxford Translations) the following extracts are taken, indicates apparent borrowings from the New Testament, p. lxxvi. For Apollonius, see Phillimore's perhaps over-severe introduction.

be succeeded by solemn, awestruck silence. It may be no great feat to check an outbreak of disorder about a troupe of dancers or a team of horses: the mere sight of a *man* puts that sort of mob to the blush; they pull themselves up and very easily see reason. Bread riots are no such easy matter: it will task the controlling and soothing powers of eloquence to turn the hearts and arrest the rage of a city which feels the pinch of starvation. But Apollonius was able by his silence to cope with people in this temper. The occasion was as follows: he came to Aspendus in Pamphylia: vetches commanded a price, the people were subsisting on bare siege-rations, because the ruling class had all the supply of grain under lock and key for profitable export. The whole youth of the place was in revolt against the Governor; they were ready to burn him alive, although he clung for sanctuary to the imperial images. Gaining access to the Governor, Apollonius asked him by gestures what was the matter. The Governor declared himself innocent of any wrong; he was a victim like the rest, and, unless he could get a hearing, he must perish like the rest. Upon this, Apollonius turned to the crowd and made signs to them to listen: and they were not only reduced to immediate silence by his personal authority, but even deposited their firebrands upon the altars in the place. The Governor now plucked up courage and said, 'Such and such persons (he named several) are to blame for the present famine. They have monopolized the corn, and are keeping it in one place or another in the country.' These words caused a general outcry among the Aspendians, 'To the country! to the country!' But Apollonius by signs induced them to do no such thing, but to summon the offenders instead and obtain corn by peaceable means. When they appeared, he was within an ace of breaking out in reproaches against them: so deeply was he touched by the tears of the multitude. There was a conflux of women and children, and the old people were moaning and resigning themselves to instant death by starvation. However, he respected his resolution of silence, and wrote

a rebuke on tablets, which he handed to the Governor to read. The rebuke was in these terms: 'Apollonius to the grain-mongers of Aspendus. Earth is the mother of all, for she is just. You by your injustice have treated her as your mother only; and if you refuse to desist, I shall not suffer you to stand upon the earth.' They were so alarmed by this that they filled the market with grain, and the city came to life again.[1]

After he had resolved to preach, his habit was to avoid any crowded and disorderly places. '*I want man*,' he would say, '*not the human animal*.' He frequented the more respectable places of resort, and lodged in temples where he found them kept open. He used to perform certain private rites at sunrise, which were only communicated to such as had gone through a four years' discipline of silence. But the rest of the day, if it were a Greek city and the religious usages normal, he would call the priests together and talk divinity with them, correcting any irregularities that he found. If the religion of the place were un-Greek and sectarian, he would carefully inquire about the founders, what was the spirit and purpose of the foundation; and when he had informed himself about their ministry, and made such suggestions as occurred to his mind for the improvement of their existing practice, he would address himself to his disciples and invite them to ask questions. He made it a principle of his philosophy to begin the morning by communing *with* the gods; next to commune with others *about* the gods; and only after that, about human affairs. After he had answered his companions and all their questions, and had enough of such conversation, he would rise up and preach in public: not before midday this, but chiefly in the early afternoon. Then, when he had spoken as long as appeared convenient, he would anoint himself and be rubbed and take a plunge into cold water.[2]

[1] I. 15. [2] I. 16.

On the Road to India

WHEN they had passed the Caucasus, we hear of their seeing men four cubits high, and they were already among blacks ; but when they penetrated beyond the Indus, there was another tribe of five cubits in stature. In the journey to that river they had an interesting incident to report : as they were travelling in a bright moonlight, they met with an apparition of an Empusa,[1] which assumed now one, now another shape, and sometimes vanished. Apollonius perceived what it was. He then cursed the hag and instructed the rest of the party to do likewise, such being the remedy for this visitation. The apparition beat a hasty retreat, squeaking like a devil.

They were in the course of surmounting the crest, and were actually walking it on foot, for the going was precipitous, when he thus began to question Damis :

' Tell me,' he said, ' where were we yesterday ? '

' In the plain.'

' And to-day where are we, Damis ? '

' In the Caucasus—unless I have taken leave of my senses.'

' Then at which time were you the lower down ? '

' Why,' says Damis, ' that is a question not worth the asking. Yesterday our journey lay in a basin of country, and to-day we are up against the sky ! '

' So you think that yesterday's journey was down below, Damis, and to-day's up on high ? '

' By Jove, I do—unless I am stark mad.'

' What difference then do you judge that there is between the two journeys, or in what respect are you better off to-day than yesterday ? '

' In this : yesterday I was walking where many walk, and to-day, where few.'

' But, Damis, even in town, cannot one avoid the crowded thoroughfares and walk with few for company ? '

[1] A ghoul.

'That is not what I meant: yesterday we were traversing villages and populated country, but to-day we are ascending untrodden and mysterious ground. Did you hear the guide say that the natives consider this to be the abode of gods?'—And so saying, he lifted up his eyes to the mountain top.

But Apollonius brought him back to the original point by asking, 'Could you tell me, Damis, what apprehension of divinity you have gained by your walk in the neighbourhood of heaven?'

'None,' said he.

'Oh, but that is not as it should be! A man who has his station upon this vast and mysterious engine ought to express clearer views about heaven and the sun and the moon, which I dare say you fancy you could touch with a stick, from our vantage of proximity to yonder heaven.'

'Such knowledge of divinity as I had yesterday is all that I have to-day, and no new idea on that subject has yet occurred to me.'

'That is to say, Damis, that actually you are still *down below*, you have got nothing by height, and are as far away from heaven as yesterday. My original question was a reasonable one, though you did think I was asking it for fun. These commanding points of view may reveal bluer skies to us, and bigger stars, and the sun rising out of the night,—one need only be a shepherd or a goatherd to see these sights,—but the methods of divine providence, the principles of acceptable worship, the nature of virtue, of justice and of temperance, these are secrets which neither Athos nor Olympus, much glorified by the poets, can display to those who climb them, unless they have spiritual discernment: for the soul, when pure and undefiled it addresses itself to these tasks, can, I tell you, easily outsoar this mountain of Caucasus.'[1]

The mountain dragons have scales which show golden; they are longer than the plain-land variety, have a curly beard (also

[1] 2. 4.

golden), a more scowling brow, and beneath it an eye which glares frightfully and ruthlessly. As they come rolling and heaving along the ground they give a metallic sound, and from their flamboyant crests shoots a fire stronger than torchlight. They make the elephants their prey, and themselves fall a prey to the Indians in this fashion: the Indians place before the dragon's hole a scarlet robe embroidered with golden characters, in which by magic they put a soporific charm strong enough to vanquish the abashless eyes of the reptile. They proceed to sing many incantations of mysterious art, the effect of which is to draw the dragon until he puts his head out of his hole and goes to sleep on the characters. Then the Indians attack him as he lies, laying about them with axes till they have cut off his head and despoiled it of the precious stones. Imbedded in the mountain dragon's head, they say, are stones of rich lustre, emitting every-coloured rays and of occult virtue.

But it often happens that the dragon seizes the Indian, axe and all, cunning and all, and then off he goes with his victim into his hole, making the very mountain wellnigh to tremble. This kind are said to inhabit the mountain by the Erythrean Sea; their frightful hissing can be heard, and sometimes they come down to the water and sail the high seas at large. It is impossible to ascertain, and unwarrantable to assert, the length of years to which this animal attains. This is all that I know about dragons.[1]

A Visit to the Brahmins

THE hill on which the Sages have their high dwelling-place is compared to the Acropolis of Athens for altitude; it rises from the plain, fortified regularly by a happy natural formation of surrounding rock. At many points of the circuit were to be seen traces of cloven hoofs and imprints of beards and masks; and occasionally they saw what looked like the dint made by a body slipping backwards. For Dionysus,

[1] 3. 8. The Erythrean Sea is the Indian Ocean.

when he made his attempt on the place with Hercules, ordered the Pânes[1] to make the assault, as being able to stand earthquake ; but they were thunderstruck by the Sages and fell in confusion : and from that day the rock bears as it were engraved the various attitudes of their discomfiture. They saw the hill enveloped in a cloud, in which the Sages live, visible or invisible at pleasure. Whether the mount had any other gates they could not tell : for the encircling cloud did not permit either the excluded or the admitted observer to determine this particular.

Apollonius went up somewhere on the south side, following the Indian. The first thing he saw was a well four fathoms wide, from the depths of which a bright blue radiance rose to the surface ; and when the sun at noon stood over it, this radiance was hoisted by the sunlight and moved upwards, giving the appearance of a summer rainbow. Later he learned that the ground beneath this well was sandaracinous,[2] and the water of it accounted sacrosanct : none drank it or drew it, but all the neighbouring part of India took their solemn oaths by it. Near this was a natural cauldron of fire which emitted a leaden-coloured flame ; but neither smoke nor any smell issued from it ; nor did the cauldron ever overflow, but always rose in sufficient volume just to brim the pit. In it the Indians purify themselves for involuntary sins ; and the Sages therefore call the well the *Well of Detection*, and the fire the *Fire of Pardon*. They saw also a pair of black stone jars,[3] called *Of the Rains* and *Of the Winds*. Should India be oppressed by a drought, the *Jar of the Rains* on being opened gives forth clouds and moistens the whole country : but should the rains be in excess, the closing of it stops them. The *Jar of the Winds*, I conceive, has the same function as Aeolus' skin-bag :[4] for by

[1] i. e. Satyrs.

[2] Sandarac is red sulphuret of arsenic and an orange colour derived from it.

[3] It has been suggested that these were barometers.

[4] Aeolus, god of the winds, kept them in a skin-bag.

opening it a little they give vent to some one wind for the comfort of the land.

They also met with images of gods. Now, had these been Indian or Egyptian, that would have been no surprise: on the contrary, it was the most ancient Greek types that these Indians set up and worshipped with Greek ritual. They call their dwelling the centre of India, and make out the mound to be the navel of the hill; on it they worship fire, which they profess to derive from the Sun's rays. And every day they sing the hymn of the Sun at noon.

The great man himself describes what the inhabitants were like, and the manner of their life. In one of his addresses to the Egyptians he says: 'I saw the Indian Brahmins dwelling in the earth, yet not in the earth; fortified without fortifications; possessed of nothing and of all things that all men have.' This is somewhat mystical phrasing of his; but Damis explains that they lay on the earth, strewing couches of such herbs as they prefer; and that he saw them levitated two cubits off the ground, not for an exhibition of magic (for they disclaim such vanity), but because they hold that all such actions are well pleasing to the Sun, as they perform detached, like him, from the earth. The fire which they extract from the Sun's rays, although it is substantial, they neither burn on altars nor preserve in hearths; but it is seen floating and shimmering in the air, like the beams of sunlight refracted from water. They pray to the Sun by day to make the seasons, which are in his personal charge, pass in happy regularity for the good estate of India; and at night they entreat the sunbeam not to be angry with the night, but to abide as induced by them.

So much for Apollonius' expression that the Brahmins were 'in the earth and not in the earth'. 'Fortified without fortifications' signifies the vapour in which they live sheltered; for though their life seems to be a bivouac under the naked sky, they erect a shade over themselves, so that when it rains they are not wetted, and, at will, are in sunshine. 'Possessed of

nothing and of all that all men have' is thus expounded by Damis: when they feast, themselves and their guests, these Indians are favoured with such fountains as leap from the earth for the pleasure of the Bacchanals when Dionysus makes them and the earth alike to quake. So Apollonius might properly describe them as having what they have not, when, without making any provision, their wants are spontaneously supplied. Their practice is to wear their hair long, like the Lacedaemonians of old; for head-dress, a white turban; bare feet; garments arranged very much in the style of the *exômis*; the material, that natural wool which the earth produces.[1] This is considered a sacred vestment; and should any other Indian try to pluck it, the earth will not let the wool go. They carry a ring and a wand, both which are of omnipotent virtue, but are esteemed to be two mysteries.

At Apollonius' approach the other Sages greeted him with gestures of welcome. Iarchas was seated on a high chair, made of black bronze damascened with golden emblems; the rest had chairs of bronze, but unadorned and less in height, for they recognized the presidency of Iarchas. When he saw Apollonius, he welcomed him in the Greek language and asked for the Indian king's letters. Apollonius wondered at such prescience; whereupon Iarchas told him further that there was a letter wanting in the epistle (namely a delta) because of an oversight in the writer. And so it proved to be. After he had read them he said, 'And what is your opinion of us, Apollonius?'

Apoll. Surely that may be inferred from my having made such a journey for your sake as never any man of my country before undertook.

Iarch. And what do you suppose that we know which you know not?

Apoll. I credit you with superior Science and far superior inspirations. But if I can get no more from you than I have already, I shall at least have nothing more to learn.[2]

[1] i.e. asbestos. The *exômis* is the sleeveless shirt worn in Greece by the poor.

[2] 3. 13.

The Brahmin Philosophy

THEY gave Apollonius leave to ask questions. He asked: Of what did they hold that the Universe consisted? They answered, 'Of elements.'

Apoll. Not four elements?

Iarch. Not four, but five.

Apoll. And what might be the fifth, besides water, air, earth, and fire?

Iarch. Ether, which we ought to believe is the origin of gods; for all that breathes air is mortal; but such as breathes ether, immortal and divine.

Apoll. Which element was first created?

Iarch. All were created at once. An animal is not born piecemeal.

Apoll. And am I to consider the universe an animal?

Iarch. Surely, if you hold the sound doctrine: it is the very parent of all things.

Apoll. Are we to call it feminine, or of the male and opposite sex?

Iarch. Both. It copulates with itself, performing both the father's function and that of the mother in procreation; it has more ardent desire for itself than any creature for any other, and this desire is its co-ordinating and constitutive principle. There is nothing improbable in this self-coalescence. And just as motion in the creature, and the creature's mind which furnishes the impulse, have created the function of hands and feet; so we must believe that the parts of the universe are by its mind directed to lend themselves to all things that are begotten and conceived. The calamitous visitations of drought visit the earth in obedience to the mind of the Universe at such times as justice is banished from mankind and left to pine in dishonour. And this great cosmic creature is tended and guided not by one hand, but by many and mysterious hands with which it is furnished; a creature too vast to be bridled—and yet it is manageable and docile in its movements. And, though

I know not what illustration will be adequate to so vast and transcendent a doctrine, let us take the instance of a ship, such as the Egyptians build and send into our seas when they traffic Egyptian for Indian commodities. There was an ancient ordinance concerning the Erythrean Sea which forbade the Egyptians to enter it in a ship of war and restricted them to a single merchantman. Accordingly the ingenious Egyptians designed a vessel to be a match for many ordinary craft. To the keel and ribs, which are the framework of a ship, they added extra height of bulwarks and mast, and fitted the vessel with several cabins, like the usual deck-house. She carries several masters, all under the orders of the senior and most experienced; several captains of the forecastle, a crew of picked men, very smart and quick at going aloft; and a force of heavy-armed troops as well: for she has to fight the natives in the Gulf, in case of a predatory attack by their cruisers. We may believe that the Universe is analogous to this. Thus, when we consider it in terms of this vessel, the first and most authoritative post is to be assigned to the god who created this animal or creature; the next, to those gods who are in command of its several divisions. And since the poets assure us it is so, let us take their word for it that there are many gods in the heavens, many in the sea, many more in springs and river-floods, and many whose province is earth, and some also beneath the earth. But the region beneath the earth (if it exists), since they sing of it as a place of horror and corruption, we must exclude from our Universe.[1]

An Interview with the Spirit of Achilles

IT was not by any necromancy of the blood of lambs that I attained to conversing with Achilles, but by offering such prayers as the Indians say that they offer to their illustrious dead ancestors. I used these words: 'O Achilles, the world says that you are dead, but I do not allow this notion, nor did Pythagoras, the progenitor of my Science. If, then, we speak

[1] 3. 34.

true, show to us your visible form : for you shall surely get no small advantage of my eyes if you have them for witnesses of your existence.' Upon this there was a slight earthquake in the region of the mound,[1] and a young man five cubits high issued from it : a Thessalian you would have called him by his cloak ; but in his mien there was nothing of the swashbuckler that some make Achilles out to have been ; terrible he was, but as you looked at him you were aware of nothing inconsistent with cheerfulness : and his beauty !—after all that Homer said of him, his beauty still seems to me to have found no adequate belauder ; it was unspeakable, rather spoiled by his poet than expressed at all near the true self. He was of the size that I said, but as you looked he presently grew bigger, and twice as big and still more : really he seemed to me to be twelve cubits high at his perfect phase, and his beauty continually increased with his stature. He said he had never shorn his locks, but kept them inviolate. His cheeks had their first downy growth. Addressing me, he said, ' I am glad to meet you : I have long been in need of a man like you. It is now a long while since the Thessalians have abandoned their religious tributes, and I do not choose to be angry yet—for if once I get angry they shall be destroyed more utterly than the Greeks of old on this field—but I do gently admonish them not to outrage use and wont, nor to fall under the reproach of being worse men than these Trojans, who, despite all the men they lost by my hand, yet sacrifice to me publicly, and give me first-fruits, and lay the suppliant's branch here in token of entreaty for reconciliation. But reconciliation they shall get none : their perjuries against me shall never permit Ilium to resume its ancient appearance, or experience such heyday of prosperity as has come to other cities after their ruin : they shall dwell here in no better case than if they had been captured yesterday. So now, that I may not reduce the Thessalians also to the like abjection, be my ambassador to their government concerning that matter where-

[1] i.e. Achilles' tomb at Troy.

of I spoke.' 'I will,' was my answer, for the purpose of the embassy was to save them from destruction. 'But, O Achilles, I have a favour to beg of you.' 'I perceive', he said, 'it is plain that you wish to ask a question about the Trojan War. Ask any five points that you please and that the Fates allow.' So I asked first whether he had got burial according to the account of the poets. 'I rest', he said, 'as I liked best and Patroclus: we were heart in hand from our earliest youth, and in death we are not divided, but one golden urn contains us both. But as for dirges of Muses and Nereids, which they say took place over me, the Muses never came here at all, though the Nereids do still haunt the scene.' Next I asked whether Polyxena was slain over him; and he said the fact was true; only she was not slaughtered by the Achaeans, but came of her own accord to the tomb and there did honour to his love and hers by falling upon her erected sword. My third question was, 'Did Helen come to Troy, Achilles, or was it a fiction of Homer's?' 'We were misled for a long time while we were sending embassies to the Trojans and fighting battles for her sake, as if she were in Troy; but she was in Egypt; she had been in Proteus' house there, ever since she was ravished away by Paris. After we were assured of this, we continued fighting for Troy's sake instead, to save ourselves from a dishonourable retreat.' I ventured a fourth inquiry, and said I was surprised that Greece bore so many and such men as Homer enlists against Troy. And Achilles answered, 'The foreign fellows were not much behind us, either. There was such a florison of valour then in all the earth.' Fifthly, I asked, 'What ailed Homer that he knows not Palamedes, or knowingly excludes him from the tale of your army?' 'If Palamedes never came to Troy,' he replied, 'then Troy never existed. But since this most ingenious and gallant of heroes was done to death because Odysseus would have it so, Homer does not introduce him into the poems lest he immortalize the reproach of Odysseus.' And Achilles groaned aloud for him, as the greatest, fairest, young-

est, and most warlike ; who surpassed them all in wisdom, and did the Muses much service. ' But do you, Apollonius,' he said, ' since great wits are akin, pay regard to his tomb, and raise up again the statue of Palamedes, which lies meanly prostrate. It is in Aeolis over against Methymna in Lesbos.'

And after so saying, and finally adding his commands concerning the youth from Paros, he departed with a little flash of lightning. The cocks were just beginning to crow.[1]

A Miracle

THE plague fell upon the Ephesians ; and as nothing availed against it, they sent a mission to Apollonius appointing him physician of their troubles. He felt that he must not delay going there : ' Let us go,' he said—and he was at Ephesus. He assembled the Ephesians and said to them, ' Be of good courage : to-day I shall stop the plague ' ; and, so saying, led all the youth of the town to the theatre where stood the image of the Averter. There they found an old man who looked like a beggar ; his eyes were closed—on purpose ; he carried a wallet, with a morsel of bread in it ; he was clad in rags, and his face squalid and filthy. Apollonius made them stand round him, and said, ' Pick up all the stones you can, and smite the abominated of Heaven.' The Ephesians were amazed what he could mean, and horrified at the notion of killing a wretched stranger ; for the beggar besought them with many piteous entreaties. But still Apollonius urged and exhorted them to lay on and not spare. Somebody began with a few skirmishing shots. And when the pretended blind man suddenly stared full at them, displaying a glance full of fire, they perceived that it was a daemon, and stoned him so heartily that a mound of stones was heaped over him. After waiting a little while, Apollonius ordered them to remove the stones and inspect the brute they had killed. When they laid bare their

[1] 4. 16. Palamedes was a Greek hero brought to death by the intrigues of Odysseus.

apparent victim, he was not to be seen, and a dog, like a Molossian hound, but as big as the biggest lion, was discovered crushed beneath the stones, spluttering foam like a mad dog.[1]

Some Teaching

WHEN he reached the borders of Egypt and Ethiopia, he found unstamped ingots of gold, flax, ivory, roots, myrrh, and spices, all lying unguarded at a fork in the road. What did it mean? I can explain, for the custom still obtains at this day. The Ethiopians bring their native merchandise for sale, and the other parties take it up and bring their Egyptian wares of equal value to the same spot, buying the commodities they want with those they have. When Apollonius perceived the manner of their market, he said, 'How different are the honest Greeks![2] They say it is not life if penny do not breed penny at interest, and if they cannot raise the prices of their wares to each other by higgling and cornering. One makes an excuse of his marriageable daughters, another of his son just coming of age, another must subscribe to his club funds, another must build himself a house, and another "would be ashamed not to be thought worth as much as his father". What good times those were when riches was in disesteem and equality flourished, and "*black iron lay stored away unknown*", when men lived in concord together, and all the earth seemed to be one!'[3]

Once when he was talking of Brotherhood, and teaching that we ought to feed each other mutually, there were a lot of sparrows sitting on the trees in silence; as the sermon went on, one of them flew up and began to twitter aloud, as if to invite the rest; and they, when they heard it, also piped up, and arose and took flight under the guidance of that one. Apollonius continued, without explaining to the crowd what

[1] 4. 10.

[2] This irony is the ancient equivalent of our eighteenth-century 'noble savage' business (Phillimore).

[3] 6. 2.

he well understood, that is, why the birds took flight. But when everybody looked at them and some people foolishly took the thing for ominous, he turned from his argument and said, 'A boy that was carrying wheat in a shovel, down such and such an alley, slipped and fell. He picked up the grain carelessly and went his way, leaving much of it scattered about. This sparrow happened to be there, and now he is come to invite the others to be his messmates and treat them to a share in his unexpected good luck.' Most of the audience went off at full speed to see about the fact; but Apollonius continued his sermon on Brotherhood to those who remained to hear; and when the rest returned shouting and full of amazement, he said, 'You see these sparrows, how they care for one another, and delight in brotherly sharing; but we will not do so, and if we do see any man sharing his goods freely among others we say "squanderer", or "pampered aristocrat!" and we call those whom he feeds "parasites" and "flatterers".'[1]

TELESINUS (consul A. D. 66). When you approach an altar, how do you pray?

Apoll. That right may be done, the law not overthrown, the masters of Science be poor, and the world be rich—but honestly.

Tel. And do you expect that all these petitions will be granted?

Apoll. In truth, I comprise them all into one prayer, and when I approach the altars I say, 'O gods, give me my deserts'. If, then, I am a good man, I shall get more than the favours I named just now; but if in the sight of the gods my place is amongst the wicked, I shall get the contrary from them, and not find fault with heaven for sending me the evils that befit my unworthiness.[2]

The only certainly authentic words of Apollonius that we possess are preserved by a Father of the Church.

[1] 4. 3. [2] 4. 40.

THE only proper way to worship God and to win at once His surpassing favour and grace, is not to sacrifice at all, nor to kindle fires, nor to name by any sensible object Him whom I called the prime Deity, the one God, apart from and before all others. He needs nothing even from beings superior to us ; and all the products of earth and air, whether plant or animal, have a taint of pollution.[1] Let us only address God in the higher language—not the language that proceeds from our lips—and ask blessings from the noblest of existing beings by means of the noblest power in us. That power is Reason, which needs no organ to express it. Therefore we should offer no kind of sacrifice to the great God who is over all.[2]

[1] And therefore should not be offered to God.
[2] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 4. 13.

X

THE SOPHISTS: POLEMON AND HERODES ATTICUS

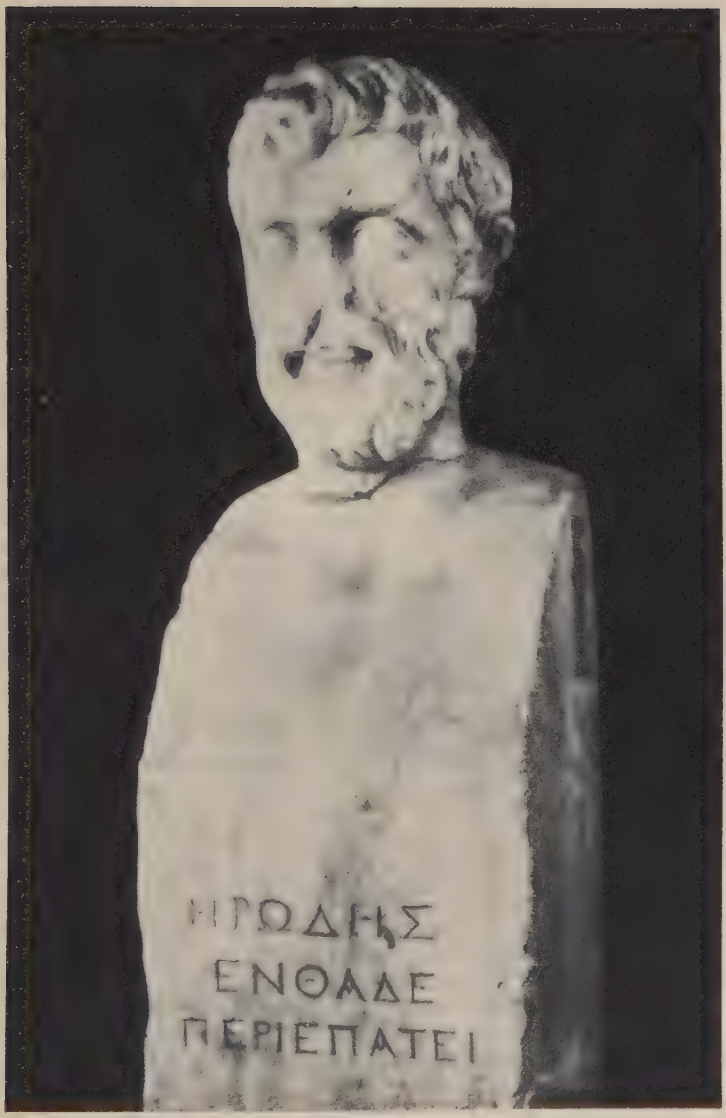
HITHERTO we have been concerned with philosophers and preachers. The subjects of this and the next chapter are men of letters; though they too have a creed, which is almost a religion, 'Literature for Literature's sake'. Polemon (A. D. 88–145) and Herodes Atticus (A. D. 101–177), whose lives I translate from Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*, belong to the second century of our era. Their own age described them as 'sophists'. The word has no bad meaning in the original and no real equivalent in English. Perhaps we might translate it as lecturers or professors. They belong to a large class. Indeed, one might call this age 'the age of the sophists'. Never in the world's history have men of letters lived in such thick clover. Never have professors done so well. Four hundred pounds seem to have been nothing uncommon for a rich man to pay for a lecture: we hear of one sophist declining to lecture for less than £2,400, and receiving £10,000 for a single speech. These, of course, were the great men of the profession. Besides money they won position and fame. In life we see them as leading figures in politics and at the bar, as priests and ambassadors, as governors of provinces and even as imperial secretaries: in death they were honoured with public funerals.

What does it all mean? What secret enabled the literary men of that age to achieve such success? What were these speeches that won them so much fame, power, and money? They were of different kinds. Some were on such subjects as Praise of Fleas, Praise of Gnats, Praise of a Lock of Hair: in which we can detect a kinship with Lamb's *Praise of Chimney-sweepers* or some of the essays of Robert Louis Stevenson. But the most popular and successful were imaginary speeches on subjects drawn from the great age of Greek history. Conceive Mr. Chesterton or Mr. Bernard Shaw appearing in the Ulster Hall at Belfast, and giving an imaginary speech on the subject of 'Cromwell defends the massacre at Drogheda' or 'Wolfe Tone urges the people of Belfast to

embrace Republicanism'. Conceive this to be correct in its historical detail and to employ the arguments and the language proper to its supposed date. Suppose it to be exquisitely phrased and delivered with such fire as to carry the audience away, as great oratory and great acting can do—then we shall have a close analogy to the lectures which brought fame and money to these sophists in the second century of our era.

The following is a picture of one of these lectures. Every detail in it is taken from ancient sources, with one modernization. The scene is the harbour of a great city. A ship has just arrived and the passengers are landing. There is a crowd on the quay to meet them, and the eyes of all are fixed on a man with the pale, thin face of a student, but aristocratic in manner and richly dressed. A carriage with silver trappings on the horses is waiting. He enters it and drives to the Town Hall. Here is gathered so dense a crowd that as he mounts the platform only heads are to be seen. He rises and commences with a short speech in praise of the city, in praise of everything about it from its situation to its water-supply, from its statues to the fish in its river. He then asks his audience to suggest a subject to him. They demand an imaginary speech by King William before the Battle of the Boyne. The sophist remains a few minutes seated in thought, then commences with a bright look on his face. At first he remains seated and speaks gently. Then rising to his feet he is carried away by his eloquence. He speaks without faltering or pausing for a word, yet this improvisation recalls the most finished efforts of the most famous orators. He smiles with conscious skill as he piles phrase on phrase and builds up his sentences. Sometimes as his passion grows he strikes his thigh, sometimes at a pathetic passage he breaks into tears. Meanwhile, the audience are as moved as if a nation's fate hung in the balance: they applaud, shout assent, weep with him, scream with delight at his skill, and even, foreseeing the ends of his sentences, finish them before he can utter them himself. After the speech is ended, he follows with 'An address by King James to his troops on the same occasion', and finally is escorted away in triumph by his hearers.

What fascination in these lectures enslaved the Graeco-Roman world to the sophists? Partly it was the patriotic



HERODES ATTICUS

The Greek inscription on the bust means 'Herodes used to walk here'

appeal made by famous and moving episodes in Greek history to a nation which in servitude loved to remember the glories of freedom. But chiefly it was intellectual interest. The level of education and literary culture was high in that rich and leisured society. Men enjoyed what was at once an historical lecture, a piece of great acting, and an eloquent speech. For the sophists were masters of their art. Give them a subject, and without preparation—such was their training—they could improvise on the spot a lecture that was perfect in matter, language, and delivery. We can conceive an educated audience enjoying the same kind of thing to-day. But this was not all. These Greeks listened to the speeches much as art critics look at pictures. As the art critic notices in a painting fineness of modelling, balance of masses, contrast of tints, depth and quality of shadow, where the ordinary spectator sees only a figure or a scene, so the audiences of the sophists noted subtleties of rhythm and language to which our ears are deaf. I have not space to illustrate this point, beyond mentioning that many of the sophists wrote Greek undistinguishable in vocabulary and grammar from the Greek of 500 years earlier.[1] It is somewhat as though a modern writer had schooled himself to use no word or form that was not found in the age of Chaucer. Such an achievement was the result of the unwearying study of a lifetime. What these men said was less important than the way in which they said it, and their success was that of literary virtuosos in a world that had come to care supremely for pure—perhaps I should have written mere—style.

The two men whose lives are given here were the greatest of the sophists. Note incidentally the glimpses of the emperors and the intense social, civic, and literary activity in the Hellenized cities of the Empire, which is nowhere revealed more vividly than in Philostratus. Its moral standards seem no lower than our own. To appreciate its significance substitute modern names, and for Polemon or Herodes write Mr. Belloc or Mr. Chesterton, for Smyrna, London or New York, for the Emperor, the King or the President of the United States.

[1] An extant speech by Herodes has been mistaken for a fifth-century original, so completely does it reproduce the historical atmosphere and the language of five centuries earlier.

POLEMON was born at the Carian Laodicea,[1] on the river Lycus, an inland city which is more important than the cities on the sea. His family produced, and still produces, many consuls: many cities were his passionate admirers, especially Smyrna. They had noted something great in him from the days of his youth, and they heaped all their local honours on his head, voting to him and his family their coveted civic distinctions. Thus, they made him and his descendants presidents of Hadrian's Olympic games and gave them a place on the Sacred Ship. (In February a ship under sail is brought to the market-place: it is taken from its sea moorings and is steered by the priest of Dionysus.)

Polemon's activities in Smyrna benefited the city. First, he made her seem even more populous than she was, by attracting to her the youth of the mainland and the islands—no licentious rabble, but pure Greek and the pick of Hellas. Then he introduced concord and unity into the political life of Smyrna. Previously there had been civic strife and a division between the parties of the interior and of the sea.

He was also a great asset to the city on embassies, going to the imperial court and pleading her cause. The Emperor Hadrian previously had leanings to Ephesus, but Polemon so converted him to the cause of Smyrna that on a single day he lavished on her £40,000, which was used to build the corn-market, the most magnificent gymnasium in Asia, and the far-seen temple on the headland which seems to confront the Cape of Mimas. His public rebukes to the errors of Smyrna and his frequent wise advice helped the city; and he banished from her all arrogance and wantonness—an achievement the more remarkable, as it is not like Ionians to reform. Among his services too was his refusal to allow local litigation to be carried elsewhere. He settled it at home. I refer to suits for money; as for cases against adulterers, murderers, and sacrilegious persons, which breed a curse if neglected, he urged not only

[1] The Laodicea of *Revelation* iii. 14.

their dismissal but their expulsion from Smyrna, saying that they needed a judge with a sword.

He was generally criticized, because he was attended on his travels by many baggage animals, many horses, many servants, many breeds of hounds for various forms of the chase, while he rode in a Phrygian or Celtic two-horse carriage with silver bridles. But this brought distinction to Smyrna. For the splendour of a city resides not only in its public places and in the magnificence of its architecture, but also in its prosperous families. A man may confer fame on a city as well as a city on a man. Besides Smyrna, Polemon kept watch over Laodicea, often visiting his home there and doing the city what public services he could.

He received the following honours from the imperial house. The Emperor Trajan allowed him to travel tax free by sea and land. Hadrian extended the privilege to his descendants, enrolled him in the Museum Circle [1] with the right to free meals, and, when Polemon was being sued in Rome for £10,000, paid the money for him, though the emperor had never promised the gift, nor the sophist said that he needed it.

When he was accused in Smyrna of having applied for his own pleasure much of the money which Hadrian had given him for the city the emperor sent a letter in the following terms: 'Polemon has given me the accounts of the money that I gave you.' This may be described as a pardon; but no doubt he could not have obtained pardon in this instance, but for the eminence of his other good qualities. The emperor dedicated, as a great victory of time, the temple of Olympian Zeus,[2] completed after 560 years, and ordered Polemon to make a speech at the religious service. He, as his habit was, fixed his eyes on the thoughts already rising in his mind, threw himself into the speech, and from the base of the temple made

[1] The Museum at Alexandria was a foundation for learned men, with some affinities to an Oxford or Cambridge college.

[2] Commenced by Pisistratus in the sixth century B.C.

a long and wonderful oration, of which the prelude was that its inspiration came not without divine help.

At his apotheosis, when handing over his power, the emperor reconciled his adopted son Antoninus [1] to Polemon. I must now tell the story of this.

Antoninus, when governor of all Asia, stayed in Polemon's house, it being the best in Smyrna and belonging to its most eminent citizen. Polemon returned at night from absence abroad, shouted at the door that it was monstrous to keep him out of his own property, and finally compelled Antoninus to move to other quarters. This came to the emperor's knowledge. To avoid an exposure of the facts he made no inquiry into it: but considering what would happen after his death, and reflecting that often gentle characters are exasperated by aggression and irritation, he was afraid for Polemon. So in his public will he said 'the sophist Polemon was among those who suggested this idea', enabling him to claim thanks for his services and thus paving the way *a fortiori* for pardon. Indeed, Antoninus made a joke on the Smyrna incident to Polemon, indicating that he had not forgotten; while the repeated honours, with which he exalted him, served as a pledge that he did not bear it in mind. The joke was this. When Polemon came to Rome the emperor embraced him and said 'Give Polemon lodging and let no one turn him out'. When a tragic actor at the Asiatic festival of Olympian Zeus, where Polemon presided, said that he should prosecute the sophist, because he had driven him off the stage at the commencement of the play, the emperor asked the actor at what hour he was expelled. The man replied that it was midday. To which the emperor very wittily rejoined: 'He drove *me* out of his house at midnight, yet I did not prosecute him.'

This may serve me to illustrate the gentleness of an emperor

[1] The Emperor Antoninus Pius. The emperors were usually deified at death, if not before. The story illustrates the mildness of imperial rule in the second century. A modern king would hardly treat such conduct so lightly.

and the arrogance of a man. For Polemon's arrogance was such that he spoke to cities as a superior, to princes on their own level, to gods as an equal. He was giving an exhibition of his powers of extempore speech to the Athenians, on his first visit to their city. Yet, though there are so many things one might say about Athens, he did not resort to praising her. Nor did he enlarge on his own fame, though this is a topic which sophists have found useful in their displays. He knew well that the right course was to impress rather than to elate the Athenian temperament, and he spoke as follows: 'Men say, Athenians, that you are skilled critics of eloquence. I shall soon see.' Once a prince of the Bosphorus,[1] completely equipped with Greek culture, came to Smyrna while studying Ionia. Polemon not only failed to pay him court, but when the prince requested a lecture continually put him off, till he compelled the foreigner to come to his door with a fee of £2,400. When he went to Pergamum suffering from rheumatism and slept in the temple of Asclepius,[2] the god appeared to him and directed him to abstain from cold drinks. 'My dear sir!' remarked Polemon; 'and suppose you were treating a cow?'

He imbibed this lofty and self-confident attitude from the philosopher Timocrates, with whom he associated for four years during his visit to Ionia.

Polemon treated Herodes of Athens sometimes as a superior, sometimes as an inferior. I wish to describe their relations, which were fine and memorable. Herodes was more enamoured of his powers of improvisation than of his consular rank and descent. He did not know Polemon, and coming to Smyrna to hear him about the time when the sophist was Administrator of the Free Cities of Asia, he embraced him in a most affectionate way, and as he withdrew his lips from Polemon's, said: 'Father, when shall I have a chance of hearing you?' He

[1] The Dardanelles. This prince held his power subject to the Roman Empire.

[2] For medical treatment. See p. 242.

expected Polemon to defer his lecture and say that he was nervous of making an attempt before so distinguished a man, but Polemon without any pretence said, ' To-day : let us go.' Herodes says that on hearing this he was overcome with admiration for one whose brain improvised as well as his tongue. This illustrates Polemon's pride and the cleverness which he employed to create astonishment ; the sequel shows his moderation and good taste : for he received Herodes on his arrival at the lecture with a long encomium worthy of the eloquence and achievements of the Athenian.

The way in which Polemon staged his lectures may be learnt from a letter of Herodes to Varus, from which I shall take this description. He advanced to deliver his speech with a calm and confident face : being crippled by rheumatism he used to be carried in. He did not meditate on his topic in public,[1] but used to withdraw in private for a few minutes. His voice was clear and powerful, and an amazing sonority thundered from his lips. Herodes says that at the climax of his argument he used to jump up from his seat in the superabundance of his passion, that as he rounded off a period, he would deliver the concluding phrase with a smile, to show the great ease with which he spoke, and that at certain points he would stamp the ground like a horse in Homer. He adds that they listened to him on the first day as critics, on the next as lovers, and on the third in amazement : for he heard him on three days. Herodes records the subjects of his speeches. The first was ' Demosthenes denies on oath the charge of taking a bribe of £12,000, which Demades brought against him, stating that Alexander discovered this from the accounts of Darius and notified the Athenians of it '.[2] In the second he urged the demolition of all Greek trophies when the Peloponnesian war

[1] It was usual to ask the audience on what subject the speech should be, and then to improvise.

[2] Note these typical subjects from Athenian history. The trophies were to be destroyed as memorials of a civil war. The disbanding into demes signified the renunciation of sea-power.

ended; in the third he disbanded the Athenians into their demes after Aegospotami. Herodes states that he sent Polemon £6,000, calling it a lecture fee, but, when Polemon declined it, thought himself treated with contempt, till the critic Munatius while dining with him remarked: 'I fancy, Herodes, that Polemon had a dream of £10,000, and thought himself injured in the degree in which your present fell short of this.' Herodes says that he added the extra £4,000 and that Polemon took it eagerly as his due. Another gift of Herodes to Polemon was that he abstained from competing with him by following him on the public platform, and that he left Smyrna by night to avoid being compelled to do so—a compulsion which he regarded as impudent. For the rest of his life he continued to praise Polemon and to admire him extremely. Thus, after a brilliant speech about the trophies, which was admired for its fire, he said, 'Read Polemon's speech and you will see a man'. When all Greece acclaimed him at the Olympic festival, shouting, 'You are a second Demosthenes', he rejoined, 'I wish I was a second Phrygian'. This was how he described Polemon, for at that time Laodicea was part of Phrygia. When the Emperor Marcus asked him, 'What do you think of Polemon?' he replied with fixed gaze,

Thunder of swift-foot steeds beats on my ears,[1]

indicating the sonorous and ringing quality of his speeches. When the consul Varus asked him who were his teachers, 'So-and-so,' he said, 'and So-and-so, when I was a pupil; Polemon, when I had become a master'.

Polemon states that he attended Dion Chrysostom's lectures and went to Bithynia for this purpose. He used to say that one should draw on prose-writers by handfuls, on poets by wagon-loads. The following is among his glories. Smyrna was engaged in a dispute about its temples and their rights, and made Polemon a counsel in the suit at the close of his life. He died

[1] A line from Homer.

at the beginning of the journey to Rome, and the city's case rested in the hands of the other counsel. They made a mess of their argument before the imperial court, and the emperor looked at them and said, 'Was not Polemon appointed as your fellow counsel in this case?' 'Yes,' they replied, 'if you mean the sophist.' 'Perhaps,' the emperor continued, 'he composed a speech on behalf of your claim, as he was to plead before me and in a matter of such importance.' 'Possibly, sire,' they answered, 'but we have not heard of it.' The emperor adjourned the suit till the speech could be brought, and after it had been read in the court, gave judgement in its sense; and Smyrna went off triumphant, declaring that Polemon had come to life again to save her.

Not only the serious pronouncements of famous men are worth recalling, but also the sayings of their lighter moments, and I will therefore record the witticisms of Polemon. An Ionian youth was living a luxurious life in Smyrna, going far beyond what was usual in Ionia. His great wealth—a bad tutor for dissipated temperaments—was ruining him. His name was Varus, and under the vicious influence of flatterers he had convinced himself that he was the handsomest of the handsome, taller than the tall, the finest and most skilful athlete in the palaestra, and a singer, when he took to it, whose performances not even the Muses could surpass. He had similar ideas about the sophists: he thought that he would outride even their eloquence when he declaimed, as he used to do; and those who borrowed money from him counted attendance at his declamations as part of the interest on their loan. Even Polemon in the days of his youth and health was subject to this tribute, for he had borrowed money from Varus; and when he failed to court him or attend his declamations, the youth was savage and threatened an action for debt. This action is under a court writ giving judgement by default against a debtor who fails to pay. Polemon's friends blamed him for being difficult and disagreeable, because, when he could escape

the debt and make his harvest off the youth by giving him a friendly nod, instead of doing so he challenged and irritated him. Polemon listened to them and went to Varus' lecture, and when he found the declamation going on till late in the evening with no signs of its eloquence coming to anchor, a regular jumble of solecisms, barbarisms, and illogicalities, he jumped up and holding out his hands said, 'Varus, produce the writ'. Once the proconsul was torturing a bandit convicted of a number of charges, and saying that he was at a loss to find a punishment adequate to his crimes, when Polemon starting up said, 'Tell him to learn the classics by heart'. For in spite of the quantity which he had learnt by heart himself Polemon thought that memorizing was the most laborious part of a sophist's training. Once, seeing a gladiator bathed in perspiration and in terror of a mortal struggle, he said, 'You are as distressed as if you were going to declaim.' Meeting a sophist buying sausages, sprats, and cheap fare, he said, 'My dear sir, you can't render the pride of Xerxes and Darius,[1] if this is what you eat.' Timocrates the philosopher once said to him that Favorinus was a chatterbox, when Polemon very wittily rejoined, 'Like any old woman'—a mocking allusion to the fact that Favorinus was a eunuch. A tragic actor in the Olympian festival at Smyrna pointed to the earth as he said 'O Zeus', and to the sky as he said 'O earth'. Polemon, who was presiding, expelled him from the competition, saying, 'The fellow has been guilty of a solecism with his hands.' Enough of this subject, for this is sufficient to show the man's graceful wit.

After some appreciation of Polemon's literary style Philostratus continues:

BEING frequently in the hands of the doctors for arthritis, he told them to dig and carve in the quarries of Polemon. He wrote about this complaint to Herodes as follows: 'I have to eat, and have no hands; I have to walk, and have no feet; I have to suffer, and then have both feet and hands.'

[1] Subjects of sophistic speeches.

He was fifty-six when he died, a limit which for the other branches of knowledge marks the beginning of old age, but for a sophist is still youth, since in this profession age seasons skill.

He has no grave in Smyrna, though several are attributed to him. Some say that he was buried in the garden of the temple of Virtue, others that his grave is not far off, close to the sea. There is a small shrine there and a statue of Polemon in it, wearing the dress in which he conducted the service on the trireme, and he is said to be buried below. Others say that he lies in the court of his house under the bronze statues. But all these reports are false, for if he had died in Smyrna, there are none of the wonderful temples in that town in which he would have been thought unworthy to rest. The truer account is that he lies in Laodicea near the Syrian Gates, where the graves of his ancestors are, and that he was buried while yet alive. For he gave instructions to this effect to his closest friends, and as he lay in the tomb urged those who were closing it: 'Quick, quick. Let not the sun see me silent.' To his friends who were lamenting over him he cried, 'Give me a body and I will declaim'.[1]

We pass to the great rival of Polemon, whom we have already met. More restrained in style, in behaviour he was more extravagant. A multi-millionaire with the soul of an artist, at least he used his wealth well. After mentioning that he belonged to a historic Greek family Philostratus proceeds with a catalogue of his public gifts.

HE used his wealth supremely well. We must not suppose that this is easy: it is extremely difficult and hard, for men who are intoxicated with riches open the floodgates of their arrogance on mankind. Wealth is called blind; but with Herodes it recovered its sight. He had his eyes on his friends, on cities, on nations; his vision embraced the world,

[1] Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, i. 25 f. There is a translation of the *Lives* by W. C. Wright. The translations in this volume are my own.

and he stored his riches in the hearts of those with whom he shared them. He used to say that a man who used his money well should give to those in need, to redeem them from need, and to those not in need, to protect them from it. To sterile riches, fettered by parsimony, he gave the name of 'dead wealth', and described the strong rooms in which some store their riches as 'wealth's prisons'.

There was a splendid magnificence about him. He was governor of the free cities of Asia, and finding the people of the Troad ill supplied with baths, and obliged to draw muddy water from wells, and to dig reservoirs to catch the rain, he urged the Emperor Hadrian not to allow an ancient city and fine seaport to perish of drought, but to give him £120,000 for a water-supply, saying that he had presented a far larger sum to mere villages. The emperor approved of the suggestion as consonant with his own character, and gave Herodes charge of the undertaking. The cost reached £280,000, and the imperial officials in Asia wrote to the emperor, saying that it was monstrous that the taxes of 500 cities should be spent on a fountain for one. The emperor found fault with Herodes, who replied in the most lordly style: 'Prince, do not be annoyed at a small matter: I will make a present to my son of any expense beyond the £120,000, and he will give it to Troy.' Similarly, the will in which he left each Athenian citizen £4 per annum betrays his lordliness. He exhibited it in other ways, often sacrificing 100 oxen in a single day, and giving a dinner after the sacrifice to the Athenian people by their tribes and families, and, on the occasion of the festival of Dionysus, providing wine for citizens and strangers alike.

As I have mentioned his will I must record the cause of his quarrel with the Athenians. The provisions of the will were as stated: and he executed it on the advice of his freedmen, who knew the harshness of his attitude to themselves and to his slaves, and tried to create a claim on the gratitude of the Athenians by being responsible for the gift. (You can see

Herodes' attitude to his freedmen from the invective against them, in which he employed every weapon of his eloquence.)

The will was read, and the Athenians made a bargain with Herodes that he should redeem the perpetuity of his gift by making a single payment of £20 to each of them. But when they went to the banks to claim the agreed sum their attention was called to contracts made with their fathers and grandfathers, under which these were in debt to the parents of Herodes. Counterclaims were lodged against them, and in the sequel some received small sums, others nothing, and some were arrested in public as debtors. This annoyed the Athenians, who felt themselves robbed of the gift, and they never ceased to hate Herodes, even when he intended to do them great services. They said that his stadium [1] was rightly called the Panathenaeum, for it had been built from sums stolen from all Athens.

Herodes served at Athens the offices of Archon Eponymus [2] and president of the Panhellenic festival. On receiving the crowning honour of the Presidency of the Panathenaea,[3] he said; 'I will welcome you, fellow Athenians, and all Greek visitors, and the competing athletes, in a stadium of white marble.' He kept his word and built the stadium on the Ilissus within ten years—an achievement that surpasses any miracle, for no theatre can rival it. It was at this Panathenaea—so I have heard—that the robe of Athena hanging on the ship was more beautiful than any painting. The wind swelled its folds, and the ship advanced without horses to draw it, sliding on a subterranean contrivance. Starting from the Ceramicus with a thousand rowers it sailed to the Eleusinium, and rounding it passed the Pelasgicum, and was conveyed to the temple of Apollo, where it is now moored. The other end of the stadium is bordered by a temple of Fortune, with an ivory statue, the

[1] The ruins may still be seen.
[2] This official gave his name to the year.
[3] A festival, at which among other things a robe was dedicated to Athena.

idea being that she rules everything. Herodes introduced the present costume of the Athenian youth, by dressing them in white cloaks. Previously they had worn black at public meetings and in processions.

Herodes also presented Athens with the theatre [1] in memory of his wife Regilla, roofed with cedar, a wood which is considered costly even for statues. These two buildings at Athens—they are unique in the Roman Empire—are memorable, as is the roofed theatre which he built at Corinth. It is far inferior to his Athenian theatre, but ranks high among the famous buildings of the world. Memorable too are his statues at the Isthmus of Corinth and the gifts with which he filled the shrine, not forgetting the dolphin of Melicertes. He dedicated the stadium at Delphi to the god, and the water-supply at Olympia to Zeus, and presented the Thessalians and the Greeks of the Malian Gulf with the curative baths for invalids at Thermopylae. He resettled the decayed towns of Oricum in Epirus and of Canusium in Italy, making the latter the civilizing present of a water-supply, of which it was in great need; and he did various services to the towns of Euboea, Boeotia, and the Peloponnese. Yet with all these great achievements he regarded himself as having effected little because he failed to cut the Isthmus of Corinth. He thought that it would be a brilliant thing to sever a mainland, join two seas, and reduce the long sea voyage to a passage of some three miles. He longed to do it, but had not the courage to make a request to the emperor, for fear that he might be criticized for attempting a design which even Nero had not been able to carry out. But he betrayed his ambition in the following remark. He was once driving along the Corinth road with Ctesidemus, who told me the story. They came to the Isthmus, when Herodes said, 'Poseidon, I wish it, but no one will give me leave.' Ctesidemus wondered at his words and asked him their cause. 'I have long been struggling', replied Herodes, 'to leave posterity evidence of a conception

[1] The Odeum, of which the remains are still to be seen.

which would reveal my character, and I do not consider myself to have yet achieved my ambition.' Ctesidemus proceeded to praise his unrivalled speeches and achievements, but Herodes said, ' These are perishable and subject to the hand of time : men steal my speeches, criticizing this or that. But to cut the Isthmus is an immortal action which one would not credit, to human nature : for to break the Isthmus seems to require the god of the sea rather than a man.'

The individual who was generally called the Hercules of Herodes was a youth in the first bloom of manhood, eight feet high and like a giant Celt. Herodes describes him in one of his letters as having an even growth of hair, bushy eyebrows that met, and a wild light in his eyes revealing an impetuous temperament : he was hook-nosed and bull-necked—the result of exercise rather than of food. His chest was well formed and beautifully slim, his legs curved slightly outwards and gave him a good stance. He wore a dress of wolfskins stitched together, and he used to wrestle with wild boars, jackals, wolves, and savage bulls, and show scars of these combats. Some say he was earthborn among the Boeotian folk. Herodes relates that he heard him say that his mother was so strong that she herded cattle, and that his father was Marathon, the country hero of whom there is a statue in the place of that name. Herodes asked him if he was immortal also. ' Longer lived than a mortal,' he said. Asked what he ate, he replied, ' Generally I live on milk, with which goats, sheep, and cows, and mares in milk supply me. Asses too give a light and agreeable milk. But when I get barley, I eat ten quarts of it. This is a present from the farmers of Marathon and Boeotia, who call me Goodfellow,[1] for they think that I bring them luck.' ' And where ', said Herodes, ' did you learn your Greek and who taught you ? You are not like an uneducated man.' ' I learnt it,' he answered, ' in inland Attica, an excellent school for conversation. For the Athenians of the city take in a

[1] W. C. Wright's translation.

collection of boys from Thrace and Northern Asia and other foreign countries, and do more to corrupt the purity of their own speech than to improve that of their visitors. But the interior of Attica, which has no contact with foreigners, keeps its language untainted, and its speech has the perfect Attic ring.' 'Were you ever at a festival?' asked Herodes. 'I was at the Delphic festival,' replied Goodfellow, 'but instead of mixing with the crowd I listened from the summit of Parnassus to the musical competitions, when Pammenes gave his wonderful tragic performance, and I thought that the wise Greeks were wrong in listening with delight to the crimes of the houses of Pelops and Labdacus:[1] for fables taken seriously are prompters of horrid acts.' Herodes seeing him in a philosophic mood went on to ask his opinion about the athletic competitions. 'I find men', said Agathion, 'even more ridiculous, when they are fighting each other in the pancratium,[2] or boxing or running or wrestling, and being crowned for it. Crown a runner who can beat a deer or a horse, or the more serious athlete who wrestles with a bull or a bear, as I do every day, now that fortune has deprived me of my great opponent, since lions are extinct in Acarnania.'

Herodes was impressed and asked him to dinner. 'I will meet you,' he replied, 'at the temple of Canopus; and see that you have the biggest bowl in the temple filled with milk, which a woman has not drawn.' The next day Goodfellow came at the agreed time and putting his nose to the bowl said: 'The milk 's not clean: I feel a woman's hand.' With these words he went away without taking a draught at the milk. Herodes noted the remark about the woman and sent to the byre to inquire: finding that it was so, he realized that there was something supernatural about the man.

A charge of murder was brought against Herodes, and this

[1] Common subjects in Greek tragedy. Of extant plays the *Agamemnon* belongs to one, the *Oedipus* to the other.

[2] A combined contest in boxing and wrestling.

is how it was contrived. It was said that, when his wife Regilla was in the eighth month of her pregnancy, Herodes ordered his freedman Alcimedon to beat her for some slight fault. He struck her in the stomach ; this brought on a premature confinement and the woman died. Treating the story as true, Bradua, the brother of Regilla, a distinguished ex-consul, prosecuted him for murder. Bradua appeared before the Roman court wearing on his shoe the ivory crescent buckle [1] indicating his high birth, and without producing any convincing evidence for his charge, delivered a lengthy encomium on his descent ; which caused Herodes to say derisively, 'You wear your nobility on your ankles.' The accuser was boasting of a service which he had done to one Italian city, when Herodes finely said, 'I too could recount many such actions on my side, if my trial had been before the world.' Herodes' defence was assisted by the fact that he had given no such orders about Regilla, and that he sorrowed over her death. His grief was misrepresented as feigned, but truth won the day.

For he would never have dedicated his great theatre to her, or have postponed his second candidature for the consulship, if he had not been innocent of the charge. Nor would he have taken her blood-stained dress and dedicated it in the temple at Eleusis ; that would have made the goddesses [2] more inclined to avenge than to pardon the murder. Besides, he changed the appearance of his house as a tribute to his wife's memory, replacing its gay hues with black hangings and colours, and with Lesbian marble, which is dark and sombre. In this connexion the philosopher Lucius is said to have given advice to Herodes, and when it was not accepted to have employed ridicule. He was a close friend of the sophist, and, being in his company when he was indulging in excessive grief, remonstrated with him as follows: 'In everything moderation is the

[1] Worn by senators.
[2] Demeter and Persephone, the Eleusis deities.

definition of sufficiency. I have often heard Musonius [1] discoursing on this point, I have often discoursed on it myself, and I listened to you at the Olympic festival praising moderation to the Greeks, when you told rivers to flow between their banks. And now what has become of all this wisdom? You have ceased to be yourself, and your acts are deplorable, for they endanger your reputation.'

And more to the same effect.

Failing to convince his friend, Lucius went away vexed, and seeing some of the servants of the house washing radishes at a spring, he asked for whose dinner they were intended. They replied that they were preparing the radishes for Herodes. 'He is insulting Regilla', said Lucius, 'by eating white radishes in a house of mourning.' The saying was reported to Herodes, who removed the darkness from his house for fear of becoming the sport of the wits. This was the way in which Herodes' grief for Regilla came to an end.

His sorrow for his daughter Panathenaïs was softened by the action of the Athenians, who buried her in the city and voted to delete from the calendar the day on which she died. But when his other daughter Elpinice died he lay on the floor beating the ground and shouting, 'Daughter, what shall I dedicate to you? What shall I bury with you?' The philosopher Sextus found him in this state and said: 'It would be a great gift to your daughter, if you mourned her with self-restraint.' This excessive grief for his daughters was caused by his anger with his son, who had been criticized to him as foolish, illiterate, and dull of memory. When the boy could not learn his alphabet Herodes conceived the idea of bringing up with him twenty-four boys of his own age, named after the various letters, in order that he might be compelled to practise his alphabet through the boys' names. He noticed that he was given to drink and to foolish love affairs, which caused Herodes

[1] A Stoic philosopher.

to apply in his lifetime the following prophetic line to his house,[1]

One fool methinks is left in the wide house.

At death he gave his son his mother's inheritance, but transferred his own property to other heirs. This seemed inhuman to the Athenians, who did not appreciate his attitude to his adopted children, whom he honoured as if they were his own, because they were honourable, upright, noble, studious, and worthy of the education which he had given them. He erected statues of them in, after, and before the act of hunting, some in copses, some in the fields, some at springs or under the shade of plane trees, not out of sight but with curses against one who mutilated or removed the likenesses of individuals whom he would not have honoured so highly, if he had not known that they deserved praise. When the Quintilii were governors of Greece they criticized his extravagant conduct in erecting these statues. ' What does it matter to you,' he replied, ' if I amuse myself with my little marbles ? '

His quarrel with the Quintilii began, it is commonly held, over a difference of opinion with them about the music at the Pythian festival : others attribute it to a jesting remark which Herodes made to Marcus Aurelius about them. They were Trojans, and seeing them highly honoured by the emperor Herodes said, ' I blame the Homeric Zeus too for his affection for the Trojans.' But the real reason was the following. When the Quintilii were joint governors of Greece the Athenians invited them to an assembly where they stated that Herodes treated Athens despotically, and begged that their complaint might be conveyed to the emperor's ears. The Quintilii were impressed by the popular outcry and eagerly forwarded what they had heard. Herodes then declared that they were intriguing and stirring up the Athenians against him. For after that meeting a number of political opponents of Herodes, of

[1] A parody of a Homeric line, *Od.* 4. 498.

the type of Demostratus and others, came into prominence. Herodes prosecuted them for inciting the populace against him, and wished to bring them before the governors' court. They evaded him and secretly approached the emperor, on whose democratic character they relied. Marcus was in quarters among the tribes of Pannonia,[1] his base being at Sirmium. The supporters of Demostratus lodged near the imperial headquarters, and Marcus provided them with food, and often inquired if they were in need of anything. His own convictions made him friendly to them, and these were supported by his wife and daughter, still a lisping child, who used to clasp her father's knees and with many endearments beg him to save her Athenians. Herodes was staying in a suburb, with towers and battlements. With him were two girls in the bloom of youth and much admired for their beauty, whom he had trained from babyhood to be his cupbearers and cooks. They were the children of Alcimedon, one of his freedmen, but Herodes called them his little daughters and loved them as if they were. They were sleeping in the strongest of the towers, when it was struck by lightning in the night and they were killed. This disaster made Herodes beside himself. He came into court out of his senses and longing for death. He denounced the emperor in an inornate[2] speech, though you would have expected such an expert in style to have his passion in hand. He broke impetuously into bald and blustering words. 'That 's the result of my hospitality to Lucius,[3] whom you sent to me : that 's your justice, making a present of me to a woman and a three-year-old child.' When Bassaeus, the prefect of the guard, remarked that Herodes was anxious for death, the latter replied, 'My dear sir, an old man has few fears.' With these words he went out of the court, leaving the water still high in the clock.[4] We

[1] Pannonia included parts of Austria, Hungary, and Jugo-Slavia. Sirmium was some twenty miles west of Belgrad.

[2] Lit. without using any figures of speech. The phrase marks an age besotted by style.

[3] The emperor's son-in-law.

[4] The time allotted to a speaker was measured by a water-clock.

must regard this case as one where Marcus showed himself conspicuously a philosopher.

He did not frown; his expression even did not alter, as a mere arbitrator's would have done; he turned to the Athenians and said, 'Make your reply, gentlemen, even without the permission of Herodes.' He listened to their answer, concealing the pain which he felt at many points in it; but when the decision of the Athenian assembly was read, in which they openly attacked Herodes for winning the governors of Greece by his honeyed eloquence and exclaimed, 'Ah, bitter honey!' and again, 'Happy victims of the plague!'[1] the words so struck him to the heart, that he gave way to unconcealed tears. The Athenians in their defence attacked Herodes and his freedmen, and the emperor diverted his resentment to the latter, inflicting on them the most moderate punishment possible—that is the way he himself describes his decision—only remitting the penalty in the case of Alcimedon on the ground that he had been sufficiently punished by the accident to his daughters. Such was the philosophical conduct of Marcus in this case.

After his experiences in Pannonia, Herodes lived in Attica in his favourite districts of Marathon and Cephisia, and young men from every part of the world, who came to Athens eager to hear his eloquence, hung on him. Anxious to ascertain if he had annoyed Marcus by his behaviour in the law-court he sent a letter to him, which contained not an apology but a complaint. He wondered, he said, why the emperor no longer sent messages to him, though previously he used to write so often that three letter-carriers once arrived in a single day on each other's heels. The emperor replied at length in a letter dealing with many matters, and instilled a wonderful spirit into his words.

[1] Plague ravaged the empire during this period. They imply that it would have been better to die of the plague than to suffer the insolence of Herodes—a bit of rhetoric characteristic of the age.

I will select from his letter what bears on my present point. It opens with 'Greetings, my dear Herodes', speaks of the military winter quarters, where the emperor was at the time, deplores the recent death of his wife, and after some words about his ill health proceeds: 'I pray that you are well and think of me as your friend, and do not regard yourself as unjustly treated, because having caught some of your friends in error I inflicted on them the mildest possible punishment. Do not be angry with me for this, but if I have vexed you or am vexing you in any way, claim the penalty from me at the Mysteries in the temple of Our Lady of Athens. When the war was at its height I vowed to be initiated: and, when that day comes, may you be my initiator.' Such, so friendly and so manly, was the apology of Marcus.

There is a story that when Cassius, the governor of the East, plotted against Marcus, Herodes reproved him in a letter in the following terms: 'Herodes to Cassius: You are mad.'[1] The letter should be regarded not merely as a reproof, but as a blow struck for the emperor by one who wielded the sword of the intellect.

The firm attitude of Herodes to abuse will be shown by his words at Athens to the Cynic Proteus.[2] Proteus, who was so hardy a philosopher that he threw himself into a fire at Olympia, had followed Herodes, abusing him in a semi-barbarous tongue. Herodes turned on him: 'Yes, you abuse me; but why in such a dialect?' And when Proteus persisted in his insults: 'We have grown old—you in abusing me, I in hearing your abuse.' His point was that he heard, but that he despised the abuse in the conviction that false charges penetrated no deeper than the ears.

I will also describe the oratory of Herodes, dealing with his style as a speaker. He counted Polemon, Favorinus, and Scopelian among his teachers. As I have already said, he

[1] Herodes finds it difficult to write or speak except in epigram.
[2] See p. 273 f.

attended the classes of Secundus of Athens, and he was a pupil of Theagenes of Cnidus and of Munatius of Tralles among the grammarians, and, for Platonic philosophy, of Taurus of Tyre.[1] The construction of his speeches is sufficiently restrained, their cleverness persuasive rather than emphatic, a combination of sonority and simplicity, a music recalling Critias,[2] original epigrams, an eloquence of wit that was not artificial but drawn from life, a pleasant style, rich in figures of speech, graceful, cleverly varied, a vigour never excessive but smooth and steady, the general character of his oratory being like grains of gold shining through a river's silvery eddies.

He was a close student of all the classics, but was a special devotee of Critias, a writer previously ignored and neglected, whom he popularized.

Greece was loud in the praise of Herodes and called him one of the Ten,[3] but instead of being overcome by this high praise he replied to his admirers, 'I am better than Andocides'. Though the quickest of learners, he never neglected hard work, but studied over his wine and at night in the intervals of sleep. For this reason careless and superficial writers used to call him 'the stuffed speaker'. Different men excel in different ways and have their different superiorities. One is admirable at improvising, another at elaborating a speech. But Herodes was supreme among the sophists in all branches, and drew his pathos not merely from tragedy but from human life.

He wrote very many letters, discourses, diaries, and handbooks which contain in compact form the flower of ancient learning. Those who bring against him the fact that while a young man he broke down in a speech in Pannonia before the emperor, seem to me not to have known that Demosthenes when speaking before Philip had the same experience. But while Demosthenes on his return to Athens demanded honours

[1] Observe the elaborate education of a sophist.
[2] The fifth-century statesman and orator.
[3] The ten greatest orators of Athens, among whom was Andocides (4th cent.).

and a crown for having lost the Athenians Amphipolis, Herodes after this disaster went to throw himself into the Danube. So extreme was his anxiety to become a famous speaker, that he fixed death as the penalty for his failure.

He became asthmatic and died about the age of 76. His death took place at Marathon, where he directed his freedmen to bury him. But the Athenians carried him off by the hands of their youth and took him to the city, where the whole population came to meet the bier with tears and cries, like children who have lost a good father. They buried him in his Panathenaic stadium, inscribing over him the following brief yet ample epitaph :

> This grave his ashes holds, the world his fame—
> Atticus' son, Herod of Marathon.[1]

A reader may ask in what sense these biographies can be described as a view of life in the ancient world. These are the vagaries of the idle rich, heightened with a touch of comic opera. At best they are the extravagant posturing of a literary coterie. But it would be a mistake to see no more in the sophists than this. There is a method in their madness, an unconscious principle in their lives. They are supreme examples of the artistic temperament. Herodes is a Whistler or an Oscar Wilde with more money and less sense of humour. The sophist has the four marks of the artist. He is a lover of beauty. He has in a high degree an instinct more common than we recognize—the passion for perfection, the desire to do a thing as well as it can be done. He values feeling for its own sake and enthrones it above reason. In consequence he slips easily into extravagance. Two of these characteristics are easily to be recognized in the sophists. The other two are equally clear. They had a passion for literature, or rather for that perfection of literary form which is part of the Greek genius. They spent hours in perfecting sentences, in elaborating rhythms, in refinements of style of which we never dream. In all this they were successful. The mere technique of writing has probably never been better understood. But in studying the form they forgot the matter. Their subjects are

[1] Philostratus, 2. 1 f.

trivial or remote from reality. Their age had great social and political problems. The sophists were too busy with words and rhythms to perceive that these existed. When they deal with real life they touch it with unreality. Mere virtuosos, they show what men may become when educated in a narrow study of literature.

Their figures that strutted on the broad stage of the Roman Empire have faded into ghosts in the lumber-rooms of history. Their fame is as silent as the crowds that filled their lecture halls. The speeches of which they and the world were so proud are unknown to all except a few scholars, who glance at them and say, What stuff! But they have their heirs and their uses. Something of their mannerisms can be seen in Stevenson. Something of their blood runs in the veins of the French Symbolists. The journal of the Des Goncourts reveals the same type of society as we meet in Philostratus. The sophists would have applauded alike the mendacious epigrams of Wilde, Shaw, or Chesterton, and the exquisite style in which French writers know how to clothe inanity. And they have their uses. For they warn us that all art is doomed to oblivion which thinks more of the form than of the matter, more of how things are said or painted than of the things themselves.

XI

A PRINCE OF NEUROTICS: AELIUS ARISTIDES

THERE can be fewer greater instances of wasted genius than Aelius Aristides. In some ways no Greek writer of this period is his intellectual equal. One of the great masters of the Greek language, he used it to record what no one cares to read. An acute dialectician, he employs his gift to prove with entire sincerity and seriousness what is either false or not worth proving.

He was the son of a priest of Zeus and born about 129 B.C. in a small town in Asia Minor. A delicate boy with an early passion for literature, he conceived a romantic enthusiasm for Egypt and visited it four times before he was twenty-six. A journey to Rome at this age induced a nervous disease, and he spent the next seventeen years in search of health, chiefly at temples of Asclepius, where treatment by suggestion was combined with baths and an open-air life. Then came a period of recovered health, in which his chief works were written. He died about 189, after a life divided between nervous illness, 'cures', and the literary pursuits of a sophist. He was a leader in his profession: no one more idealized literature into a religion. But it is not his sophistic activities that chiefly concern us here. Fifty-five works by him have survived. They include historical harangues; speeches in praise of cities, somewhat resembling the impressionist sketches (*Sensations d'Italie*, &c.) at which the French are adepts, and showing us the cities of Asia as a second-century Greek saw them; religious hymns; literary pronouncements, including two very long defences of rhetoric against the philosophers; and six books of a diary describing his illness. These are all written in the purest Attic, and, though perfectly individual, are indistinguishable in language from writings of five centuries earlier. They are terribly diffuse, egoistic, and silly, but written in a style which bears comparison with the greatest Greek writers.

The following extracts from the Diaries or 'Sacred Orations' introduce us at once to the man. They were mainly written

after he had recovered, but are based on notes of his dreams taken at the time. His illness was nervous: the variety of his symptoms, the rapid transformation of one complaint into another, the absence of organic disorder, the restoration to health after a long period, are enough to show this. His character and occupation were favourable to such a disease. Self-centred and excitable, he was devoted to literary work, which tries the nerves, and instead of giving outside interests focuses the mind on itself. The spectacle which Aristides affords is more curious than attractive. But even those who find his faults overpowering may be entertained by the picture of the little society to be met in the temple courts—invalids and sympathizers, puzzled doctors and astute attendants of the god; Dr. Satyrus, whose 'light and simple' plaster proved so disastrous; Senator Sedatus, 'best of men', who had come from Rome for the treatment; Epagathus, Aristides' first tutor, 'a very good man who unmistakably had communion with God and remembered entire dream oracles'; his old nurse, 'dearest Philumene', and the rest. Particularly amusing and characteristic of a neurotic is his attitude to doctors. He had many, and they did their worst on him; and the worst of the second century was bad. He mistrusted them, not unjustifiably, though always ready to take their preposterous prescriptions. He loves to represent them as baffled or mistaken, but he keeps returning to them.

The following passage recounts the origin of his complaint, and gives a lively picture of ancient travelling in the winter:

I LEFT for Rome in mid-winter, and from the date of my leaving suffered from wet and cold; but I paid no attention to the conditions, trusting in my physical training and my invariable good luck. By the time I had reached the Dardanelles I was suffering violently in my ear, and was generally in an abnormal condition. After recovering a little I proceeded. There followed rain, frost, ice, every kind of wind. The Danube had recently been broken up, so that boats could cross; otherwise the ice had turned everything into land, and there were flooded plains as far as the eye could reach. Inns were scarce, and more water came through the roof within than fell from the sky without. Amid all this I hurried and raced onwards

out of all relation to the time of year or my physical strength. The army postal service never passed me on the way. I used to hunt up guides in person, when they were needed, and even that was none of the easiest. They evaded one like savages, and I had to drag them along, sometimes by persuasion, sometimes even by force. All this increased my illness. My teeth were absolutely reduced to a condition in which I held my hands beneath them, expecting them to fall out, and I was unable to take any food except milk. It was then that I first felt the asthma in my chest, and was attacked by violent fevers and other unspeakable things. I lay ill in Edessa close to the waterfall, and with difficulty reached Rome twenty days after leaving home.

The Roman doctors treated him with aperients, with drastic cupping, with antidotes against poison, and he determined to escape from them before it was too late.

I THOUGHT I ought to return home, if I could possibly stand the journey. To go by land was out of the question—my frame could not tolerate the shaking—so I tried the sea. Of my pack-animals some had been killed by the bad weather, the surviving ones were sold. It was a regular Odyssey. No sooner were we in the Tuscan Sea when there arose surf, darkness, a hurricane, and an uncontrollable turmoil of the sea. The helmsman dropped the tiller, the captain and the sailors threw dust on their heads, and kept bemoaning their own and the ship's fate. The sea poured over us in torrents at bow and stern, wind and wave deluged me ; this went on for a day and a night. It was about midnight when we made the Pelorian Cape in Sicily. Next in the Straits we drove and drifted to and fro. Two nights and a day saw us across the Adriatic, the tide carrying us noiselessly along. When we had to make Cephallenia, a heavy swell got up again, the wind dropped, and we drifted up and down. Utter physical weariness and exhaustion. What happened in the Aegean is indescribable ; our good

sailors insisted on leaving Patrae at the very equinox, though I was reluctant and protested from the first : and all the time my chest and the rest of me got yet worse. . . . At last with difficulty we reached Miletus, and making our way by degrees arrived at Smyrna, beyond all our hopes. The doctors and trainers collected and could do nothing for me, nor could they diagnose the complicated character of my illness. However, they so far agreed as to take me to the hot springs, since I could not stand the air of the city.[1]

We shall now see something of the treatment of nervous complaints in antiquity, and for this must imagine a temple of Asclepius such as Pater has described in the third chapter of *Marius the Epicurean*. The patients slept in the precincts—this is called ' incubation '—and the treatment was based on their dreams, which Asclepius was supposed to have inspired. The method seems hazardous, but dreams admit of many constructions, and the attendants, tactful men used to the work, guided the patient in his interpretation. Thus, when Aristides dreamed that 120 litres of blood were to be taken from his elbow the attendants assured him that only once before had they heard of such an amount being prescribed, and while the sophist had the pleasure of reflecting on the uniqueness of his case, the operation was conveniently interrupted by a dream that he should take a bath in the Caïcus. The following extracts give a glimpse of these ' incubations ' and of some typical dreams and their interpretation :

THE doctors were greatly puzzled, and unable to do me any good, or even to diagnose my illness. The most distressing and baffling symptom was a complete loss of breath. After the greatest efforts and despair I would get my breath again with difficulty and struggling and relief. There ensued continuous choking in the throat, the muscles were contracted and I wanted heavier coverings than I could bear. I suffered other unspeakable agonies besides. It was decided that I should take hot baths, to see if I could get a little ease and tolerate the open air better ; for it was winter and the

[1] *Sacred Orations*, ii. 60 f.

baths were not far from Smyrna. Then it was that the Saviour [1] first began to work. He told me to proceed barefoot, and I cried in my dream, as one might on waking after a vision, 'Great is Asclepius: the command is accomplished'. I seemed to be shouting this as I went along. This was followed by a summons to Pergamum, which I reached without misadventure.

The sequel is beyond man to tell, but I must try to carry out my purpose and narrate some of its incidents offhand. If any one wishes to know the exact details of what the god did for me he must look at my note-books and the actual accounts of the dreams. He will find all kinds of cures, conversations, long speeches, a variety of visions, every sort of prediction and prophecy, oracles on many subjects, some in prose, some in verse—for all of which I owe more thanks to the god than you can conceive. Now let me begin with my first night in the temple, when the god appeared to my nurse in the shape of the present consul Salvius. Who Salvius was I did not then know: he happened to be undergoing treatment by the god at the time. The nurse said that the god in the shape of Salvius talked to him about my speeches, indicating his meaning by using the words 'Sacred speeches'. So much for that. After that the god gave me remedies in person, of which the first, I remember, was balsam juice, saying that it was the gift of the Fulfiller of Pergamum. After the bath I was to anoint myself with it, as I went from the hot water into the cold. Then there was some soap made out of raisins and other things, then thousands on thousands of prescriptions, which I am compelled to pass over in order to come to the surprising part of the story.

Asclepius sent me to Chios, saying that it was for a purge. So I left by the Smyrna road, very distressed and believing myself to be without a protector and sailing indeed under my own star, once we had left the temple. When we reached Clazomenae we thought that we ought to sail to Phocaea. We were in the neighbourhood of the islands of Drumussa and

[1] Asclepius. The symptoms are hysterical.

Pelé, when an easterly breeze sprang up, which as we went farther became a violent squall, and at last broke into a furious storm. Our ship lifted in the bows and crashed down on her stern and all but went down. Then it was swept by waves from every quarter; finally, it was driven out to the open sea. Sweat and confusion of the crew, every kind of shout from the passengers—some friends were travelling with me—but I had only to say ' O Asclepius '. After many and various dangers, after being tossed a thousand times and forced out to sea as we were getting into harbour, causing great anxiety to the onlookers, we achieved difficult and welcome safety. At nightfall the god directed the purge to take place, indicating the means (the results were as drastic as with hellebore, so the experts said, everything being upset by our tossing). He told everything—that I was fated to be shipwrecked; that this was the reason for our misadventure; that now it was further necessary for our safety and for fulfilling fate completely that I should enter a skiff and be wrecked in the harbour; that the skiff was to capsize and sink, and some one was to pick me up and take me to the land. Thereby what was necessary would be accomplished.[1] Naturally we were delighted to do this: every one admired the stratagem of this shipwreck, following a danger that was real. We recognized that it was Asclepius too who saved us from the sea. And a further service of his was the purge.

After this Asclepius kept us in Phocaea, giving some remarkable instructions relating not only to my physical health, but to many other things. Once I needed milk in consequence of the god's orders, and there was none. I decided that search should be made: and Rufus went to an outlying farm on his estate, and, finding a sheep which had lambed that night, brought the milk and gave it me. Finally, the god released me from the voyage to Chios. Quite near Phocaea is a place called

[1] Asclepius indicates this ingenious way (' the stratagem ') in which Aristides could fulfil without danger his fate of being shipwrecked.

Gennaïs. Asclepius kept me here some days at the baths and brought me back to Smyrna. There he appeared to me in the following guise: he was Asclepius and Apollo in one—both the Clarian Apollo and the Pergamene, called 'God of Fair Children', to whom the first of the three shrines is dedicated. Standing before my bed in this shape and putting out his fingers he made a calculation of dates, saying, 'You have ten years from me and three from Sarapis;' at the same time owing to the position of his fingers the thirteen appeared seventeen.[1] He said that this was not a dream but a waking vision, and that I should know it myself. At the same time he told me to go down to the river in front of the city and bathe. A beardless boy, whom he pointed out, should be my guide. These are the main points of the revelation. I would have given anything to be able to describe it in detail.

It was mid-winter, and a black north wind and frost. The stones were so frozen together that they resembled a continuous surface of ice; the water was what you would expect in such weather. The story of the revelation had got abroad, and I was escorted by my friends, and by some doctors whom I knew and by others who came to share my trial or simply out of curiosity.

There was a considerable crowd besides (for a largesse[2] happened to be going on outside the city), and everything was in full view from the bridge. There was present a Dr. Heracleon, a friend of mine, who admitted to me on the following day that he had gone with the conviction that at best I should be attacked by cramp or something of the sort. When we reached the river, no encouragement was needed, but still full of warmth from the sight of the god, I threw off my clothes and, without asking any one to give me a rub, I plunged into the deepest part of the stream, where I amused myself as though it had been a swimming bath, and the water temperate

[1] The illness lasted seventeen years.
[2] A public distribution by some generous citizen.

and mild, swimming in it and splashing myself all over. When I came out my skin was all aglow and my body felt all light, and there was a loud cry from those present and those who came up —the famous cry ' Great is Asclepius '. The sequel is beyond all powers of description. For all the rest of the day and the night till I went to bed the condition produced by the bath continued ; I felt neither too dry nor too damp. The warmth did not in the least either diminish or increase. Nor was it the kind of warmth that might result from any human contriving, but a continuous glow, equally distributed over the whole body and skin. My mental condition corresponded. It was not like an obvious pleasure, and you could not have called it a human kind of enjoyment. It was an indescribable cheerfulness, in which nothing seemed to matter except the feeling of the moment, so that though I saw the external world it was as though I saw it not.[1] So complete was my union with the god. For the sequel, my master,[2] it is for thee to show and suggest the order which my story should follow, and where I should turn that my action may please thee and my tale proceed with the fullest beauty.[3]

The following are more dreams : observe their interpretation.

ON the 19th I thought that I fell into the hands of some foreigners,[4] and that one of them attacked me and looked as if he was going to stab me. Then he put his finger in—so—as far as my gullet and poured something in after some fashion of his country and called it acidity.[5] I thought that afterwards I told this as a dream, and that my hearers were astonished and said that this must be the cause of my being thirsty but unable to drink—because my food was converted into vinegar.[5] After this an aperient was indicated,

[1] A good attempt at describing a psychological state.
[2] Asclepius.
[3] *Sacred Orations*, ii. 6 f.
[4] Parthians, with whom Rome was then at war.
[5] The Greek words are ὀξυσιτία and ὄξος.

and the foreigner told me to refrain from bathing and to keep an attendant by me all to-morrow. No bathing, and an aperient followed by relief.

The following day I thought that I was in the arcade before the temple, when a friend met me and embraced me and was very friendly, as though it was long since he had seen me. I said to him that I had been in discomfort. We went inside, and stopping by the statues of Good Fortune and The Good Genius continued our talk. Seeing a temple servant I asked him where the priest was, and he said, ' Behind the shrine ; for the custodian was busy with the sacred lamps and was bringing back the keys.' Meanwhile the temple had been locked, but so as to leave an entrance and a view of the interior. I went to the door and saw in the place of the regular statue another one with downcast eyes. I was surprised and was looking for the old statue when some one brought it to me. I seemed not quite to recognize it, but I worshipped it earnestly. After this we went round and met the priest, and I began to address him as follows : ' When I was in Smyrna I had a dream of talking to you about the temple, and, thinking that it was too important a matter for me, I said nothing. But I have lately had a dream on the same subject.' At the same time I meant to speak to him about restoring the statue to its old place. As I was walking about, one of my sandals fell off, and the priest picked it up and brought it to me. The compliment pleased me, and wishing to return it and to greet him I bent down and took the sandal. Thereupon a bull attacked me just by the Hearing Place [1] of the god. I was frightened and tried to protect myself, but he went straight and gored me under the right knee. Dr. Theodotus took a lancet and cleansed the wound, so that I was going to say to him, ' You have made it a sore '. That was my dream. And a sore like a boil did come under my right knee, and seemed to relieve the upper part of my body.[2]

[1] The meaning is unknown. Some spot or apparatus in the temple seems indicated.

[2] ib. i. 9 f.

On the 7th I seemed to be at some hot baths. There happened to be some men near, suspicious-looking characters, with daggers in their hands. Some of them approached me, as though to ask me to be their advocate, for some people were accusing them. Once I was surrounded, I was in despair, neither trusting them nor wishing to show my mistrust. I thought I walked along a road and got into a very long vault, where I was afraid that they would attack me. When to my delight I had passed through it, I found myself in Smyrna in the market square, and was thinking how to collect a crowd quickly and explain the situation. Then I got a lamp, and every one else in the market-place was carrying one and calling out the line of Euripides,

Sun, whose swift horses roll thy flame afar.

For I thought it was dawn at my entrance. Afterwards I seemed to tell this as a dream to Quadratus the governor, and he said, 'Do it': and the lamp was lifted up. No bathing.[1]

On the 19th I thought that I was staying in the palace and that the imperial pair [2] showed me amazing and incomparable honour and attention in each successive thing that I did. I had every privilege given me, where no one else had any. I lived and spent my time with them indoors, without any of the other bigwigs being present, and in turn they took me about with them. They went to examine a trench which was being dug round the city, to avoid damage from an inrush of water; I saw the earth from it being thrown out. They showed me extraordinary favour in our walk. Often I found myself between the two, and when I wished to move round, to let the elder be in the middle, the younger moved with me, and I always stayed where I was. I thought that he was only a boy.

[1] *Sacred Orations*, i. 22. The association, in the dream, of the 'hot baths' and an unpleasant adventure was regarded as a warning against bathing.

[2] Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Observe Aristides' characteristic vanity.

This happened repeatedly. We had to go up a high place—a sort of ladder—and first the younger helped me and I gave an exclamation of gratitude. Next the elder brother was above and was asking me some sort of question, and I said that he could not have done more for me.

Afterwards, as I was about to go away, I said, 'Thank you, my lords, for all the consideration and honour which you have shown me.' And they replied, 'No; it is for us to thank heaven for letting us know a man like you: for we think that you are equally great in literature.' Then the elder began to say that excellence of character and literary excellence went together, and the younger followed with some one's saying that 'writings follow character'.[1] 'I wish it might be so,' I rejoined. 'It is good for my literary work, if you hold such an opinion of me in other matters, and if I have two advantages instead of one.' My answer to them was somewhat to this effect. And there were thousands of other incidents and sayings, far exceeding my description or expectation. Then I fell asleep and fancied that a friend called Diophanes told me that he had been with me and witnessed the amazing honours paid me, and that one of my younger companions had been there too and had been astonished to hear the general esteem in which I was held. After this I seemed to be in a bath. And first it occurred to me what a terrible thing I had done, before seeing the imperial pair, in having a bath;[2] for I thought I had met them yesterday. Then as I was being rubbed down and some perspiration came, I said, 'Let us go inside'. So I bathed and took an emetic towards evening, taking to heart the incident of the carrying away of the soil.[3]

[1] These Ruskinian sentiments are characteristic of Aristides.

[2] He was supposed, previously to this dream, to be abstaining from bathing.

[3] ib. i. 46 f. See above. The final sentences show how specific treatment was supposed to be indicated in dreams. The emetic was indicated by the carrying away of the soil from the trench (mentioned above)—an operation symbolizing the result of an emetic. Bathing was indicated by the dream of the bath.

I had slept, following some dream-vision, between the main gates and the folding doors of the temple, and the god sent me the following oracle :

The evening brought them strength by grassy springs.

Then I anointed myself in the open air in the temple precinct, and washed at the sacred well, and those who saw me could not believe their eyes. I had almost completely shaken off my illness ; but when the god indicated by signs a change of treatment and I myself was ready to comply,

The evil counsel of my friends prevailed,[1]

who, claiming to be scientific and appearing to possess some capacity in this direction, interpreted my dreams in an unnatural way and emphatically declared that the god indicated that I should persevere in the same treatment. I yielded against my will, full of suspicion and thinking that I knew better, but not wishing to seem to listen to nobody except myself. Experience gave me a fine lesson that my judgement was right. But enough of my advisers' blunders : though even these were an additional testimony to the god. For the fact that the same treatment and the same things, when I was under the guidance of the god and his explicit instructions, brought well-being, strength, a sense of lightness, ease, cheerfulness, and everything that was best for body and soul, but, when I took the advice of others who had not hit the god's meaning, had precisely the opposite effect—this surely is the greatest evidence of the god's power.[2]

In *Marius the Epicurean* Pater describes the priest of Asclepius coming to the bedside of the patient and giving him the kind of advice which Pater no doubt gave his pupils. But there is no trace of such methods in Aristides. The treatment is mixed : baths and exercise ; bleeding and reducing processes ; prescriptions which do not excite our confidence ; a diet mainly wholesome and light, though at times surprising (on one occasion after purging and a failure of appetite goose's

[1] Homer, *Odyssey*, x. 46. [2] *Sacred Orations*, ii. 71 f.

liver followed by pig's paunch is prescribed: we are not astonished that on this occasion 'the fever did not entirely leave me'). Prominent are 'paradoxical remedies', which if surprising are psychologically sound: they captivated the patient by their strangeness, and, while stimulating his faith, struck at the roots of his disease by taking him out of himself. The following passages throw light on these, on diet, and on other aspects of the 'cure':

PARADOX plays a very large part in the cures of Asclepius: for instance one patient drinks chalk, another hemlock, a third strips and bathes in cold water, when you would suppose that he needed hot baths. In this way too the god has honoured me, curing catarrhs and chills by sea and river bathing, remedying hopeless prostration by long walks, telling me to deliver speeches and write when I could not breathe.

This was about the time when I was abstaining from all animal food except chicken, and from all vegetables except wild herbs and lettuce and from all sweets. Now the god prescribed that I should rely entirely on one food, and I ate chicken, though loath to accept even this. I passed this period sometimes employing abstinence from baths, bleeding, and purges, sometimes leading an ordinary life. For six years I went without any fish, and I cannot say how long I abstained from pork. Afterwards by permission of the god I took both. He forbade me caviare absolutely, saying that it was not good for the head and still less for the teeth. He gave me remedies for the latter. First I was to burn a lion's tooth, crush it and apply it as an ointment, and next I was to wash out the mouth with asafoetida—the famous unguent—then pepper (he added, 'For warmth'); then spikenard—this too as a lotion. I was forbidden beef in the following way. I thought Zosimus got an oracle saying that he would live 'as long as the cow in the field lives'. I said to him, 'Do you know what the oracle means? It tells you to abstain from beef.' And I am told that Zosimus,

besides the chill of which he died, *had* touched some beef from a sacrifice and suffered for it.[1]

Those who read the *Sacred Orations* in the original may forget their fatuity in the ease, simplicity, and power of the style. To others they will appeal as a study in pathology, a document which brings us very near a human being and a sanatorium of 1,800 years ago, a portrait of the prince of neurotics. But Aristides is, or might have been, something more. His was one of those highly strung temperaments, charged with nervous energy, which supply the world with its impossible idealists, its artists, its religious devotees. Egoists at bottom they find their satisfaction in alliance with some cause outside themselves, which offers their genius an enlarged scope—Flaubert or Whistler forget themselves in art, Augustine in religion, Ruskin in preaching a philosophy of life. So the personality of Aristides expresses itself in a curious trinity of egoism, religion, and art, one developing out of the other.

His egoism needs no illustration. Inborn, it was riveted on him by a disease which turned his thoughts on himself. His religion centres round the deity to whose temples he went in search of health and who became his support. Here this neurotic forgot his powerlessness in the presence of a stronger power, sleeping in the temples, tended by the priests, and carrying out by day the suggestions of the dreams which the god was supposed to have sent. Real devotion speaks in his rhapsodies and real faith led him to bathe his broken body in icy streams. One seems at times to be listening to a mediæval mystic. The relation of Aristides to his 'Saviour' is essentially one of personal contact and intimate conversation with the Divine: the essence of his religion is personal weakness and strength perfected in another: and phrases recur which recall Augustine or St. Paul.

> I TOOK refuge in the temple of Asclepius, considering that if I was to be saved, it was nobler to be saved by him, but if this was impossible, that it was time to die.

I seemed to touch the god and discern that he was himself there; I seemed to be between sleeping and waking, and to

[1] *Sacred Orations*, iii. 34.

wish to look up and to be in an agony lest he should depart before I could do so, and to put my ear close to him and to listen, half-asleep, half-awake, my hair on end, my eyes full of joyful tears, my mind swelling with an unburdensome load. What human words could describe it ? The initiated know and can declare it.

The Saviour, the god who guides and orders all, the Saviour of all that is, the guardian of the immortals, the helmsman at the tiller who preserves all that is or that comes to be.

O much and often, in days and nights, in private and public by me invoked, my lord Asclepius, how welcome, how deeply longed for was your gift—to reach after profound seas of depression a harbour of calm and to salute the hearth where all men are at home ! Every man under the sun is admitted to its rites, yet may I maintain that till to-day no Greek has enjoyed them as I.

I have come so far in the faith that Another will provide, that I speak I scarce know how. He that commands is greater to me than any preparation.

Asclepius bids me speak : so I must not take my bodily weakness into account in comparison with the Saviour himself, nor fear the vastness of the subject.

If you consider and count the nature and the number of my experiences and note how they were governed by a compelling power, and how the god brought me to seas and rivers and wells, and how he ordered me to fight with storms, you will declare my story to be indeed beyond any miracle, and will see in fuller measure the power and providence of the god, and will rejoice with me in the honour which was shown me, rather than grieve with me for my infirmity.

With all their absurdities and repulsiveness these speeches contain a mystic's confession of faith. They have the mystic's supersensual aspirations, the mystic's consciousness of personal weakness, combined with the confidence of faith. It would be ironical to liken Aristides to a Christian saint. But it is interesting to speculate what might have been his career if he had lived two centuries later and, like Augustine, had been brought into close contact with Christianity. Possibly his egoism might have been absorbed and transformed. As it was he gave his devotion to Asclepius and to literature. Literature is the third member of that trinity in his life, of which egoism and religion are the remaining figures.

Here there are no doubts about his views, for over 400 pages are devoted to their exposition. They are the best testimony to his intellectual subtlety, though they are infinitely tedious and radically unsound. But however perverse his views, he was a true worshipper of literary beauty. It meant to him perfect polish of style, subtleties of rhythm that we cannot appreciate, and the use of the undefiled Greek tongue as it was used by the great classical masters. The devotion of Aristides to this ideal was at any rate not cheap or easy. To achieve his aim this invalid submitted to the immense labours which finally enabled him to reproduce without a slip the vocabulary and syntax of 500 years before his time. Here are two passages which may give some idea of his attitude to literature. The first describes his emotions when declaiming.

WHEN the light of God enfolds a speaker and possesses his soul, like a drink drawn from the wells of Apollo, it fills him at once with tension and fervour and a sense of delight, raises his eyes heavenwards and lifts his hair, till, devotee or bacchanal as you will, he sees nothing present or absent but the Spirit of literature and its guardian deities, gazing up to them as men do to one who hands them gifts from on high. Then he utters words which he cannot bear to leave unspoken; for the moment calls to his lips language which one unacquainted with such crises could not conceive. If he relax the tension of his thought or subordinate it to his hearers, he cannot maintain the proper fire of his eloquence. His fervour, like a potion, has entire charge and guidance

of the ship of his personality and allows no obstacle to check it. When it leaves him, the forces of literature ebb and those of torpor dominate him. A dullness, a chill seizes him, and he sinks down like an eagle that furls his wing.[1]

Alone of all the Greeks I know I have devoted myself to literature not for wealth or glory or honour, or a marriage or a princedom, or for any external thing. I loved her without disguise for her own sake and she has honoured me as my love deserved. Some delight in the company of a loved one, some in bathing, some in drinking to repletion ; others are dazzled by horse or hound. Some desert literature because they are devoted to amusement, others because some other concern occupies their minds. For me all titles, all meanings are summed up in her. I look on her as child and parent, as activity and relaxation, as everything. To her I give the name of love ; she is the companion of my light and serious moments, my delight, my darling.[2]

That is the artist's creed, which we shall find in Flaubert or Whistler no less than in Aristides. ' No,' wrote Flaubert to his fiancée, ' you had far better love my art and not myself. . . . Worship thought, for in thought alone is truth. . . . Can art, the only thing in life that is true and valuable, be compared with earthly love ? Can the adoration of relative beauty be preferred to an eternal worship ? Veneration for art—that is the best thing that I possess : it is the one thing for which I respect myself.'

The following extracts from *The Roman Speech* show another side of Aristides. The speech contains much windy rhetoric, and, like most panegyrics, it goes too far : the author did not see the Roman Empire in a dry light. But it shows how one of her provincial subjects could speak of Rome, and at times pierces, in a degree remarkable for a contemporary, to the secret of her success. The speech begins with a review of other empires : the Persians, ' who never learnt to distinguish empire from despotism ' ; the Greeks, ' who dreamed of empire

[1] *Or.* 49. 114. [2] *Or.* 51. 19.

rather than proved capable of acquiring it'; Alexander, 'who won a kingdom but never was its king'.

THIS which was hidden from all previous empires has been reserved for you to discover and perfect. Nor is it surprising. As in other things arts arise to correspond with each province of life, so when a vast empire of surpassing power has come into being, an art of government is created and accompanies it, and each strengthens the other. For the greatness of an empire inevitably creates great stores of experience, and at the same time an empire rightly and naturally grows by knowledge of the art of ruling. We cannot enough contemplate and admire the unique grandeur of your statesmen's conception. They have divided into two classes all the members of your empire, and your empire is the world; the more accomplished, noble, and capable you have everywhere and without exceptions made fellow citizens, or rather fellow countrymen; the rest you have made obedient subjects. Neither sea, nor broad intervening lands, are bars to citizenship. Asia and Europe are not divided here. Everything is open and common to all. No one deserving power or trust is a foreigner for you. A democracy of the whole earth has been established under a single and admirable ruler, and all your subjects meet in one centre, each to receive his deserts. What a city is to its frontiers and its territories, Rome is to the inhabited world—the world's city to which all belong. A great people, you mapped your city on great lines. You might have been arrogant and made her admired by refusing to share her privileges with others. Instead you sought a worthy complement for her, and made 'Roman' the name, not of a city, but of a common race.

No envy sets foot in the empire; for you were the first to disown it, by making common property of all you have, and giving those who were fit the chance of ruling as well as of being ruled. Thus no feelings of hatred arise from people being ignored. There is common citizenship—citizenship as it were

in a single city—so that it is natural to the rulers to treat their subjects not as aliens but as fellow countrymen. The masses in the empire are secure from their governors: they rely on the indignation and punishment which you will show if these dare to misbehave, and the existing régime naturally contents and benefits poor and rich alike. No other way of life is left. A single harmonious, all-embracing state has been created. So the cities are free from garrisons; a regiment or a squadron is enough to defend whole nations. And these troops are not quartered in strength in the towns of each country, but scattered up and down as the population demands, so that many peoples do not know where their guardians are.

Instead of disputing for primacy and empire, the source of all previous wars, some countries enjoy the pleasant peace of noiselessly gliding water, happy that their labours and troubles are past, repenting their useless fights with shadows; others do not know or remember their ancient dominance, but have exchanged mutual quarrels and disorders for a collective supremacy, and suddenly come again to life. Wars seem beyond credence; to the masses they are an idle tale; and if there is fighting somewhere on the frontier, as there may be in a great and immeasurable empire, through mad Getae, or miserable Africans or wretched peoples on the Red Sea, who cannot enjoy the good they have, it and its story pass quickly away like a legend.

Aristides then shows how Rome avoided the evils and secured the advantages of a mercenary force by denationalizing her auxiliaries and making them Roman citizens; how she took too few men from a country to drain its resources or form a nucleus for rebellion; while the presence of provincials in the army made the peoples from which they were drawn conscious of a stake in the empire. Then he speaks of the frontier walls. 'In front of these walls, stands as their shield a much greater and more majestic *enceinte*, everywhere and utterly unbroken and indestructible, far outshining all, unique in history—men without a thought of flight.'

THE whole world keeps holiday, and laying aside its ancient dress of steel has turned in freedom to adornment and all delights. The cities have abandoned their old quarrels, and are occupied by a single rivalry, each ambitious to be most pleasant and beautiful. Everywhere are playgrounds, fountains, arcades, temples, workshops, schools. To use a metaphor from medicine, the world sick from creation has recovered its health. Gifts never cease flowing from you. One cannot find one place more richly endowed than another, for your beneficence is equally shown to all. Cities are ablaze with brightness and beauty, and all the earth is adorned like a king's garden. The beacon fires of friendship rise on her plains, and those of war are gone as though a wind had blown them beyond land and sea: in their place has come every beautiful spectacle and an endless number of games. Like sacred, ever-burning fires, festivals never cease, but move from people to people and are always being celebrated somewhere. You have best shown the truth of the universal legend that earth is the common mother and fatherland of all. To-day Greek or foreigner may travel freely where he will, with full or empty hands, as though he was passing from homeland to homeland. The Cilician gates have no terrors for him, nor the narrow sandy passes through Arabia to Egypt, nor difficult mountains nor inhospitable savage tribes nor rivers broad beyond measuring. To be safe, it is enough to be a Roman, or rather a subject of yours. You have made into a reality the saying of Homer that earth belongs to all, for you have meted out the whole world, bridled rivers with many a bridge, cut mountains into carriage roads, filled the deserts with outposts, and civilized all things with settled discipline and life.

Another passage deals with the imperial régime.

EVERYTHING is carried out at a command, at a sign, quicker than one could sound a string. If anything needs doing, it is enough to resolve it, and it is done. The

governors dispatched to cities and peoples each control those under their charge, but, in their own persons and in their relations to each other, are all alike controlled. They differ from their subjects, in being themselves the first to show how to submit to government. Such fear of the Great Governor and Universal President has been instilled into all. They think that he knows what they are doing better than they know it themselves, and they feel more fear and respect for him than a man feels if his master is present, standing over him and giving him orders. If they have some small doubt about a case or claim of an individual or a community in their province, they send to the emperor at once and ask what they shall do, and wait till he signifies his will, like a choir with its trainer. He need not wear himself out travelling round his empire ; he need not go from place to place, and settle the affairs of each by setting foot on its soil. He can sit in comfort at home and guide the world by letters, which reach their destination almost as soon as they are written, as though birds carried them.

Is not this better than any democracy ? There when the people has once given its vote, you cannot go elsewhere or to a further tribunal, but must accept the decision. But here there is another great court of appeal, which no point of justice ever escapes. Here is a great and proper equality between the small and the great, between the obscure and the illustrious, between the poor and the rich and well-born. Hesiod's saying is realized ; for this prince and judge

Easily makes men powerful and easily crushes power,

following the guidance of righteousness which, like a breeze on shipboard, does not favour or further the rich more and the poor less, but helps equally those who have justice on their side.[1]

The following extract is from a funeral address on a famous teacher, addressed to the people of Cotyaeum, in Phrygia. It is a portrait of an ancient scholar and schoolmaster. But the traits are curiously modern. It touches on the weaknesses

[1] Extracts from *Or.* 14.

and the strength of scholarship in every age, and, with a few changes, might be applied to a York Powell, a Henry Jackson, a Gilbert Murray.

SOME scholars aim at great things and ignore details, but Alexander started with the minutiae of his trade and passed on to its perfection. Some again research deeply into the elements and alphabet of their subject and spend all their lives on these, failing either to observe, or else to achieve, the goal for the sake of which it is worth while to master them ; but Alexander followed the road from start to finish, without missing anything which was worth a moment's attention. He became the literary banker of the Greek world. One could draw from the springs of his knowledge anything one needed in the world of culture. The greatest and most remarkable thing about him, as I once said to him, was that, having mastered the gamut of learning more perfectly than the experts in each of its departments, he took no pompous title but remained a 'schoolmaster', and, instead of excluding others from his studies, frankly collaborated with them and always assisted their advancement to the best of his powers. Of other prominent personalities in the world of culture, some had good critical powers, but were poor speakers ; others had mastered the art of speaking, but their knowledge was shallow : others had had an encyclopaedic training, but had been blinded by it to more essential things and had neglected what is best. Alexander united all these qualifications in himself.

If in spite of his gifts of eloquence he did not turn away to oratorical composition[1] and the like, but preferred to devote himself to the Greek classics, this is consonant with that generous and open-handed attitude to his pupils, which at once stored their minds with knowledge and, if he saw them poor, found them salaried positions. By his own unaided effort he educated and planted out great numbers of them and became literally a colonizing agent for Greece. His activities may be compared

[1] i. e. adopt the lucrative profession of a sophist.

to one of the great mother cities : for he settled many in many places for their own good and for the good of those who came in contact with them. His actions refuted the saying of Hesiod,

Poet is envious of poet ;

for he was the universal father of every member of the guild of literature, and all hoped more from him than from themselves. He did not criticize the literary amateur, yet he was the admiration of the expert. It was the ambition of men of letters to be his intimate, while those whose glory and fame lay in other fields regarded the evidence of his friendship as the highest element in distinction. So he was a favourite with every one, and when he was not in public service he would be staying with members of the imperial family or in the emperor's own palace.[1] He passed from one to another and was regarded as a new ornament of our royal house. Though he acquired such power and authority as to become foster-father as well as tutor to the young princes, it is difficult to describe his modesty and moderation. . . . He was a benefactor to thousands, yet he never asked any return for his services. But he was not ashamed to take money for his profession. He thought it good that young people should be ready to sacrifice something for learning when they could afford it ; he never troubled those who could not pay, but I know that he gave them money of his own. Nor were his services confined to his teaching and his professional skill : he was inferior to none in practical and civic life. None know better than you, and some of you have told me, that he practically rebuilt your city anew. His

[1] He was tutor to the young princes L. Verus and M. Aurelius (the future emperor). The latter has given a glimpse of him in the *Meditations* (1. 10) : ' From Alexander, the grammarian, let me learn to be sparing of rebuke. Should any one, in my hearing, use a barbarism, or a solecism, or mispronounce a word, let me, like him, refrain from breaking in with a reproof, but, with what tact I may, say what the speaker ought to have said, under pretence of corroborating his arguments or contributing something to the question at issue, avoiding all reference to the disputed phrase,—or at least try to use some similarly inoffensive mode of correction.'

activities were not mere words. And more valuable than his buildings were the reasonableness and justice that guided all his words and works, his avoidance of megalomania, and the good sense that dominated his munificent services to you.

You realize, and posterity will appreciate, the fineness of the writings which he has left and their superiority to those of his fellow scholars ; but they are slight and poor shadows of his mind and culture. His talk was so far above them. I recall Plato's saying, that books are child's-play compared to the actual company of the wise. So let no one suppose that he will see the complete Alexander in his writings, though his work on Homer is adequate and in many ways is a fine piece of writing.[1]

It would be difficult to better this portrait of a scholar. It shows, incidentally, something of the literary ideals that lay behind sophistry. And it shows Aristides at his best, because for a moment he is not thinking of himself. One side of him indeed no translation can show. He is among the great masters of the Greek language. But his powers are wasted by egoism and spoilt by that want of balance, that absence of a sense of fact, which often accompanies egoism. The final thought we have of him is of a great brain spent in creating what posterity ignores ; of idealism and devotion consecrated to a passing fancy of the human spirit.

[1] *Funeral Speech on Alexander, Or.* 12.

XII

LUCIAN

In the early second century of our era and in the big town of Samosata in Northern Syria, a small boy one day was scraping the wax of the tablets on which he wrote at school and modelling cows and horses in it. A few years later, by a natural transition, he was an apprentice in a sculptor's shop. He broke a slab of marble. There followed blows, tears, and flight. His mother took his side, and he was allowed to pursue his early bent for literature. We trace him as a student in the Greek cities of Asia Minor; then, in Greece, Italy, and France, as a lecturer and professor of rhetoric: then throwing this up in disgust, turning writer, and finally holding a legal post in the civil service in Egypt. This boy, whose story well illustrates the career open to talent in the Roman Empire, was called Lucian (b. A. D. 125). His works, which fill four volumes in translation, show human nature and human folly in a rich, cultivated, and cosmopolitan age painted by a satirist of genius. He closes fitly our list of writers: for, sceptic and critic, he reviews and judges all the creeds and tendencies of his time.

Of all Greek writers Lucian is perhaps the easiest reading for a modern. His world, like ours, was rich in wealth, literature, and art; his wit, sceptical, audacious, yet touched with seriousness, is familiar; and we can appreciate the urbane, half-cynical philosophy with which this heir of centuries of Greek culture looks on the follies and superstitions of his age. Close correspondences between ancient and modern types are rare, but Lucian is one of them; his spirit might have passed by reincarnation into Anatole France. There is the same irony, wit, and mastery of the pen in both: the same dislike of clericals, plutocrats, and fanatics; the same cultured refinement, the same vague idealism, the same taste for ordure—though here the modern is far the worse offender, and most of Lucian could be put in any one's hands.

Lucian is a witness to Hellenism's power of assimilation. This son of Syrian working people became so completely a child of Greece, that, except for express testimony, we could never guess that he was not born in Athens. Eighty-two

works have survived under his name, too miscellaneous to be brought into definite classes. He prefers the dialogue form, of which he is a master, and which he uses to express his views, much after the manner of Anatole France. For his philosophy of life, *Nigrinus* and *Hermotimus*, or satires like *Charon* and *The Voyage to the Lower World*; for portraits of impostors, *Alexander* and *The Death of Peregrinus*; for satires on ancient religion, *The Gods in Council*, *Zeus Cross-examined*, *Zeus as Tragedian*, and *Dialogues of the Gods*; for criticisms of contemporary philosophy, *The Sale of Creeds* and *The Fisherman*; for the life of a Greek philosopher in a Roman household, *The Dependant Scholar*; and for an admirable skit on travellers' tales, *The True History*—can be especially recommended. Almost everything he wrote is worth reading: and the reader's best course is to get a volume in the Oxford Translation and dip at random.

Unlike Plutarch, whose eyes are fixed more on what he loves and admires than on what he dislikes and despises, Lucian at first impresses the reader as essentially negative. He is pleasantly occupied with exposing humbug and deriding stupidity. He satirizes the great pretensions and small performances of contemporary philosophy, the absurdities of Greek religion, the vulgarities of the plutocrat. The follies of the pedant, the spiritualist, the book-collector are pilloried as mercilessly as the more vulgar credulities of mankind. Lucian moves up and down pricking the gaudy bubbles of vanity and fraud. That perhaps is why to many people he seems merely negative. Yet he has a positive ideal. He himself says, 'My profession is to hate pretension and imposture, lying and pride: I hate their whole loathsome tribe, and you know how numerous they are. However, I do not neglect the complementary branch, in which love takes the place of hate, and which includes love of truth and beauty and simplicity and of all that belongs to love's world.'[1] The words find an echo in all ages of culture. The temper and almost the language is that of Goethe's *Im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen resolut zu leben*, and Matthew Arnold's 'Sweetness and Light'. It is the gospel of the educated man of letters. Its weaknesses are easy to point out—vagueness, want of 'body', remoteness from common life, a tendency to express itself in negatives. Its value is in pricking bubbles, in clearing the turbid waters

[1] *The Fisher*, 20.

of public opinion, and in reminding the world of the duty of loving 'truth, beauty, simplicity, all that belongs to love's world'.

Apart from the interest of his matter, Lucian has a particular charm of style. This Syrian stone-carver lived to carve sentences. He possesses, as fully as Plato, the peculiar qualities of the Attic genius: simplicity with subtlety, verve with moderation, lightness yet sureness of touch, a preference for the rapier over the bludgeon, the power of attacking an enemy with deadly effect but without raising the voice.

The following extracts show some of the men and movements which Lucian saw in the Graeco-Roman world, and how he viewed them. We may begin with an impostor, Alexander of Abonutichus in Asia Minor. Lucian sketches his character thus:

YOU are to conceive a temperament curiously compounded of falsehood, trickery, perjury, cunning; it is versatile, audacious, adventurous, yet dogged in execution; it is plausible enough to inspire confidence; it can assume the mask of virtue, and seem to eschew what it most desires. I suppose no one ever left him after a first interview without the impression that this was the best and kindest of men, ay, and the simplest and most unsophisticated. Add to all this a certain greatness in his objects; he never made a small plan; his ideas were always large.[1]

Joining forces with a Byzantine (who soon afterwards died), Alexander buried in a temple some brazen tablets stating that Asclepius,[2] the god of healing, would shortly appear in Abonutichus. These were duly discovered and the news spread to Abonutichus, whither Alexander and his accomplice went, taking a tame snake.

THIS heroic entry into his long-left home placed Alexander conspicuously before the public; he affected madness, and frequently foamed at the mouth—a manifestation easily produced by chewing the herb soap-wort, used by dyers;

[1] *Alexander* (extracts). My extracts are from the brilliant translation by H. W. and F. G. Fowler (Oxford Translations).

[2] For his cult, see p. 242. Snakes were associated with it, and Asclepius was supposed to appear in the form of one.

but it brought him reverence and awe. The two had long ago manufactured and fitted up a serpent's head of linen ; they had given it a more or less human expression, and painted it very like the real article ; by a contrivance of horsehair, the mouth could be opened and shut, and a forked black serpent tongue protruded, working on the same system. The serpent from Pella was also kept ready in the house, to be produced at the right moment and take its part in the drama—the leading part, indeed.

In the fullness of time, his plan took shape. He went one night to the temple foundations, still in process of digging, and with standing water in them which had collected from the rainfall or otherwise ; here he deposited a goose egg, into which, after blowing it, he had inserted some new-born reptile. He made a resting-place deep down in the mud for this, and departed. Early next morning he rushed into the market-place, naked except for a gold-spangled loin-cloth ; with nothing but this and his scimetar, and shaking his long loose hair, like the fanatics who collect money in the name of Cybele, he climbed on to a lofty altar and delivered a harangue, felicitating the city upon the advent of the god now to bless them with his presence. In a few minutes nearly the whole population was on the spot, women, old men, and children included ; all was awe, prayer, and adoration. He uttered some unintelligible sounds, which might have been Hebrew or Phoenician, but completed his victory over his audience, who could make nothing of what he said, beyond the constant repetition of the names Apollo and Asclepius.

He then set off at a run for the future temple. Arrived at the excavation and the already completed sacred fount, he got down into the water, chanted in a loud voice hymns to Asclepius and Apollo, and invited the god to come, a welcome guest, to the city. He next demanded a bowl, and when this was handed to him, had no difficulty in putting it down at the right place and scooping up, besides water and mud, the egg in which

the god had been enclosed ; the edges of the aperture had been joined with wax and white lead. He took the egg in his hand and announced that here he held Asclepius. The people, who had been sufficiently astonished by the discovery of the egg in the water, were now all eyes for what was to come. He broke it, and received in his hollowed palm the hardly developed reptile ; the crowd could see it stirring and winding about his fingers ; they raised a shout, hailed the god, blessed the city, and every mouth was full of prayers—for treasure and wealth and health and all the other good things that he might give. Our hero now departed homewards, still running, with the new-born Asclepius in his hands.

He now kept the house for some days, in hopes that the Paphlagonians would soon be drawn in crowds by the news. He was not disappointed ; the city was filled to overflowing with persons who had neither brains nor individuality, who bore no resemblance to men that live by bread, and had only their outward shape to distinguish them from sheep. In a small room he took his seat, very imposingly attired, upon a couch. He took into his bosom our Asclepius of Pella (a very fine and large one, as I observed), wound its body round his neck, and let its tail hang down ; there was enough of this not only to fill his lap, but to trail on the ground also ; the patient creature's head he kept hidden in his armpit, showing the linen head on one side of his beard exactly as if it belonged to the visible body.

Picture to yourself a little chamber into which no very brilliant light was admitted, with a crowd of people from all quarters, excited, carefully worked up, all a-flutter with expectation. As they came in, they might naturally find a miracle in the development of that little crawling thing of a few days ago into this great, tame, human-looking serpent.

And now at last the object to which all this had led up, the giving of oracular answers to all applicants, could be attained. Alexander proclaimed that on a stated day the god would give

answers to all comers. Each person was to write down his wish and the object of his curiosity, fasten the packet with thread, and seal it with wax, clay, or other such substance. Alexander would receive these, and enter the holy place (by this time the temple was complete, and the scene all ready), whither the givers should be summoned in order by a herald and an acolyte ; he would learn the god's mind upon each, and return the packets with their seals intact and the answers attached, the god being ready to give a definite answer to any question that might be put.

The trick here was one which would be seen through easily enough by a person of your intelligence (or, if I may say so without violating modesty, of my own), but which to the ordinary imbecile would have the persuasiveness of what is marvellous and incredible. He contrived various methods of undoing the seals, read the questions, answered them as seemed good, and then folded, sealed, and returned them, to the great astonishment of the recipients. And then it was, ' How could he possibly know what I gave him carefully secured under a seal that defies imitation, unless he were a true god, with a god's omniscience ? '

Perhaps you will ask what these contrivances were ; well, then—the information may be useful another time. One of them was this. He would heat a needle, melt with it the under part of the wax, lift the seal off, and after reading warm the wax once more with the needle—both that below the thread and that which formed the actual seal—and reunite the two without difficulty. Another method employed the substance called collyrium ; this is a preparation of Bruttian pitch, bitumen, pounded glass, wax, and mastic. He kneaded the whole into collyrium, heated it, placed it on the seal, previously moistened with his tongue, and so took a mould. This soon hardened ; he simply opened, read, replaced the wax, and reproduced an excellent imitation of the original seal as from an engraved stone. One more I will give you. Adding some

gypsum to the glue used in book-binding he produced a sort of wax, which was applied still wet to the seal, and on being taken off solidified at once and provided a matrix harder than horn, or even iron.

So oracles and divine utterances were the order of the day, and much shrewdness he displayed, eking out mechanical ingenuity with obscurity, his answers to some being crabbed and ambiguous, and to others absolutely unintelligible. He did however distribute warning and encouragement according to his lights, and recommend treatments and diets ; for he had, as I originally stated, a wide and serviceable acquaintance with drugs ; he was particularly given to prescribing ' cytmides ', which were a salve prepared from goat's fat, the name being of his own invention. For the realization of ambitions, advancement, or successions, he took care never to assign early dates ; the formula was, ' All this shall come to pass when it is my will, and when my prophet Alexander shall make prayer and entreaty on your behalf.'

There was a fixed charge of a shilling the oracle. And, my friend, do not suppose that this would not come to much ; he made something like £3,000 *per annum* ; people were insatiable —would take from ten to fifteen oracles at a time. What he got he did not keep to himself, nor put it by for the future ; what with accomplices, attendants, inquiry agents, oracle writers and keepers, amanuenses, seal-forgers, and interpreters, he had now a host of claimants to satisfy.

He had begun sending emissaries abroad to make the shrine known in foreign lands ; his prophecies, discovery of runaways, conviction of thieves and robbers, revelations of hidden treasure, cures of the sick, restoration of the dead to life—all these were to be advertised. This brought them running and crowding from all points of the compass ; victims bled, gifts were presented, and the prophet and disciple came off better than the god ; for had not the oracle spoken ?—

Give what ye give to my attendant priest ;
My care is not for gifts, but for my priest.

A time came when a number of sensible people began to shake off their intoxication and combine against him, chief among them the numerous Epicureans ; in the cities, the imposture with all its theatrical accessories began to be seen through. It was now that he resorted to a measure of intimidation ; he proclaimed that Pontus was overrun with atheists and Christians, who presumed to spread the most scandalous reports concerning him ; he exhorted Pontus, as it valued the god's favour, to stone these men. Touching Epicurus, he gave the following response. An inquirer had asked how Epicurus fared in Hades, and was told :

Of slime is his bed,
And his fetters of lead.

I have mentioned that the serpent was often exhibited by request ; he was not completely visible, but the tail and body were exposed, while the head was concealed under the prophet's dress. By way of impressing the people still more, he announced that he would induce the god to speak, and give his responses without an intermediary. His simple device to this end was a tube of cranes' windpipes, which he passed, with due regard to its matching, through the artificial head, and, having an assistant speaking into the end outside, whose voice issued through the linen Asclepius, thus answered questions. These oracles were called *autophones*, and were not vouchsafed casually to any one, but reserved for officials, the rich, and the lavish.

This triple rogue now hit upon an idea which would have been too clever for the ordinary robber. Opening and reading the packets which reached him, whenever he came upon an equivocal, compromising question, he omitted to return the packet ; the sender was to be under his thumb, bound to his service by the terrifying recollection of the question he had

written down. You know the sort of things that wealthy and powerful personages would be likely to ask. This blackmail brought him in a good income.

I should like to quote you one or two of the answers given to Rutilianus. He had a son by a former wife, just old enough for advanced teaching. The father asked who should be his tutor, and was told,

Pythagoras, and the mighty battle-bard.

When the child died a few days after, the prophet was abashed, and quite unable to account for this summary confutation. However, dear good Rutilianus very soon restored the oracle's credit by discovering that this was the very thing the god had foreshown ; he had not directed him to choose a living teacher ; Pythagoras and Homer were long dead, and doubtless the boy was now enjoying their instructions in Hades.

Alexander once made himself supremely ridiculous. Coming across Epicurus' *Accepted Maxims*, the most admirable of his books, as you know, with its terse presentment of his wise conclusions, he brought it into the middle of the market-place, there burned it on a fig-wood fire for the sins of its author, and cast its ashes into the sea. He issued an oracle on the occasion :

The dotard's maxims to the flames be given.

The fellow had no conception of the blessings conferred by that book upon its readers, of the peace, tranquillity, and independence of mind it produces, of the protection it gives against terrors, phantoms, and marvels, vain hopes and inordinate desires, of the judgement and candour that it fosters, or of its true purging of the spirit, not with torches and squills and such rubbish, but with right reason, truth, and frankness.

Perhaps the greatest example of our rogue's audacity is what I now come to. Having easy access to Palace and Court by Rutilianus' influence, he sent an oracle just at the crisis of the German war, when M. Aurelius was on the point of engaging the Marcomanni and Quadi. The oracle required that two

lions should be flung alive into the Danube, with quantities of sacred herbs and magnificent sacrifices. I had better give the words :

> To rolling Ister, swoln with Heaven's rain,
> Of Cybelean thralls,[1] those mountain beasts,
> Fling ye a pair ; therewith all flowers and herbs
> Of savour sweet that Indian air doth breed.
> Hence victory, and fame, and lovely peace.

These directions were precisely followed ; the lions swam across to the enemy's bank, where they were clubbed to death by the barbarians, who took them for dogs or a new kind of wolves ; and our forces immediately after met with a severe defeat, losing some twenty thousand men in one engagement.

I must give you one or two of the answers that fell to my share. I asked whether Alexander was bald, and having sealed it publicly with great care, got a night oracle in reply :

> Sabardalachu malach Attis was not he.

Another time I did up the same question—What was Homer's birthplace ?—in two packets given in under different names. My servant misled him by saying, when asked what he came for, a cure for lung trouble ; so the answer to one packet was :

> Cytmide and foam of steed the liniment give.

As for the other packet, he got the information that the sender was inquiring whether the land or the sea route to Italy was preferable. So he answered, without much reference to Homer :

> Fare not by sea ; land-travel meets thy need.

I laid a good many traps of this kind for him ; here is another. I asked only one question, but wrote outside the packet in the usual form, So-and-so's eight Queries, giving a fictitious name and sending the eight shillings. Satisfied with the payment of the money and the inscription on the packet, he gave me eight

[1] The goddess Cybele was attended by lions. The story throws a strange light on M. Aurelius.

answers to my one question. This was, When will Alexander's imposture be detected? The answers concerned nothing in heaven or earth, but were all silly and meaningless together. He afterwards found out about this, and also that I had tried to dissuade Rutilianus both from the marriage and from putting any confidence in the oracle; so he naturally conceived a violent dislike for me. When Rutilianus once put a question to him about me, the answer was:

Night-haunts and foul debauch are all his joy.

My object, dear friend, in making this small selection from a great mass of material has been twofold. First, I was willing to oblige a friend and comrade who is for me the pattern of wisdom, sincerity, good humour, justice, tranquillity, and geniality. But secondly I was still more concerned (a preference which you will be very far from resenting) to strike a blow for Epicurus, that great man whose holiness and divinity of nature were *not* shams, who alone had and imparted true insight into the good, and who brought deliverance to all that consorted with him.[1] Yet I think casual readers too may find my essay not unserviceable, since it is not only destructive, but, for men of sense, constructive also.

Alexander was beyond doubt a quack. It is otherwise with the individual satirized in the following extract. Peregrinus was a Cynic, and apparently a sincere fanatic, travestied by Lucian, who did not like or understand 'enthusiasm'. He may well have been sincerely attracted by Christianity; his attacks on the imperial régime and on the millionaire Herodes Atticus were doubtless sincere, and his suicide meant for heroic martyrdom. But the chief interest of the dialogue is as showing how the Christians impressed a cultivated Greek of the second century; Lucian's derision is an unintended testimonial.

IT was now that he came across the priests and scribes of the Christians, in Palestine, and picked up their queer creed. I can tell you, he pretty soon convinced them of his superiority;

[1] The story of Alexander shows the value of Epicureanism as a combater of superstition.

prophet, elder, ruler of the Synagogue—he was everything at once ; expounded their books, commented on them, wrote books himself. They took him for a god, accepted his laws, and declared him their president. The Christians, you know, worship a *man* to this day,—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. Well, the end of it was that Proteus was arrested and thrown into prison. This was the very thing to lend an air to his favourite arts of claptrap and wonder-working ; he was now a made man. The Christians took it all very seriously : he was no sooner in prison, than they began trying every means to get him out again,—but without success. Everything else that could be done for him they most devoutly did. They thought of nothing else. Orphans and ancient widows might be seen hanging about the prison from break of day. Their officials bribed the gaolers to let them sleep inside with him. Elegant dinners were conveyed in ; their sacred writings were read ; and our old friend Peregrine (as he was still called in those days) became for them ' the modern Socrates '. In some of the Asiatic cities, too, the Christian communities put themselves to the expense of sending deputations, with offers of sympathy, assistance, and legal advice. The activity of these people, in dealing with any matter that affects their community, is something extraordinary ; they spare no trouble, no expense. Peregrine, all this time, was making quite an income on the strength of his bondage ; money came pouring in. You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them ; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on trust, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property. Now an

adroit, unscrupulous fellow, who has seen the world, has only to get among these simple souls, and his fortune is pretty soon made ; he plays with them.

To return, however, to Peregrine. The governor of Syria perceived his mental warp : ' he must make a name, though he die for it : ' now philosophy was the governor's hobby ; he discharged him—wouldn't hear of his being punished.

Proteus now set out again on his wanderings. The Christians were meat and drink to him ; under their protection he lacked nothing, and this luxurious state of things went on for some time. At last he got into trouble even with them ; I suppose they caught him partaking of some of their forbidden meats.

Pilgrimage number three, to Egypt, to see Agathobulus. Here he went through a most interesting course of discipline : shaved half his head bare ; anointed his face with mud ; grossly exposed himself before a large concourse of spectators, as a practical illustration of ' Stoic indifference ' ; received castigation with a birch rod ; administered the same ; and mystified the public with a number of still more extravagant follies. Thus prepared, he took ship to Italy, and was scarcely on dry land again when he began abusing everybody, especially the Emperor, on whose indulgence and good nature he knew that he could safely rely. The Emperor, as you may suppose, was not greatly concerned at his invectives ; and it was his theory that no one in the garb of philosophy should be called to account for his words, least of all a specialist in scandal. Proteus's reputation throve upon neglect. The crack-brained philosopher became the cynosure of unsophisticated eyes ; and he grew at last to be so unbearable that the city prefect judiciously expelled him : ' we do not require philosophers of your school,' he explained. Even this made for his notoriety : he was in every one's mouth as the philosopher who was banished for being too outspoken, and saying what he thought.

Finally, Proteus arrives in Greece ; and what does he do

there? He makes himself offensive in Elis; he instigates Greece to revolt against Rome; he finds a man of enlarged views and established character,[1] a public benefactor in general, and in particular the originator of the water-supply to Olympia, which saved that great assembly from perishing of thirst—and he has nothing but hard words for him; 'Greece is demoralized,' he cries; 'the spectators of the games should have done without water, ay, and died if need be,'—and so many of them would have done, from the violence of the epidemics then raging in consequence of the drought. And all the time Proteus was drinking of that very water! At this there was a general rush to stone him, which pretty nearly succeeded.

Finally, Proteus announced that he would cremate himself at the Olympic games. Lucian determined to be in at the death.

ON our arrival at Olympia, we found the vestibule full of people, all talking about Proteus. Some were inveighing against him, others commended his purpose; and most of them had come to blows about it when, just after the Heralds' contest, in came Proteus himself, with a multitudinous escort, and gave us a speech, all about himself;—the life he had lived, the risks he had run, the trials he had undergone in the cause of philosophy. He had a great deal to say, but I heard very little of it; there was such a crowd. Presently I began to think I should be squeezed to death in the crush (I saw this actually happen to several people), so off I went, having had enough of this sophist in love with death, and his anticipatory epitaph. Thus much I heard, however. Upon a golden life he desired to set a golden crown. He had lived like Heracles: like Heracles he must die, and mingle with the upper air. ''Tis my aim,' he continued, 'to benefit mankind; to teach them how contemptible a thing is death. To this end, the world shall be my Philoctetes.' The simpler souls among his audience

[1] Herodes Atticus. See p. 227.

wept, crying ' Live, Proteus ; live for Greece ! ' Others were of sterner stuff, and expressed hearty approval of his determination. This discomposed the old man considerably. His idea had been that they would never let him go near the pyre ; that they would all cling about him and insist on his continuing a compulsory existence. He had the complexion of a corpse before : but this wholly unexpected blow of approbation made him turn several degrees paler : he trembled—and broke off.

After repeated postponements, Proteus had finally announced a late hour of the night for his exhibition. Accordingly, about midnight I got up (I had found lodgings with a friend), and set out for Harpine ; for here was the pyre, just two miles and a half from Olympia, going east along the racecourse. We found on arrival that the pyre had been placed in a hole, about six feet deep. To ensure speedy ignition, it had been composed chiefly of pine-torches, with brushwood stuffed in between.

As soon as the moon had risen—for her presence too was required at the glorious spectacle—Proteus advanced, in his usual costume, accompanied by the chiefs of the Cynics ; conspicuous among them came the pride of Patrae, torch in hand ; nobly qualified for the part he was to play. Proteus too had his torch. They drew near to the pyre, and kindled it at several points ; as it contained nothing but torches and brushwood, a fine blaze was the result. Then Proteus threw aside his scrip, and cloak, and club—his club of Heracles—and stood before us in scrupulously unclean linen. He demanded frankincense, to throw upon the fire ; being supplied he first threw it on, then, turning to the south (another tragic touch, this of the south), he exclaimed : ' Gods of my mother, gods of my father, receive me with favour.' And with these words he leapt into the pyre. There was nothing more to be seen, however ; the towering mass of flames enveloped him completely.

Again, sweet sir, you smile over the conclusion of my tragedy. As for me, I saw nothing much in his appealing to his mother's gods, but when he included his *father's* in the invocation I

laughed outright; it reminded me of the parricide[1] story. The Cynics stood dry-eyed about the pyre, gazing upon the flames in silent manifestation of their grief. At last, when I was half dead with suppressed laughter, I addressed them. 'Intelligent sirs,' I said, 'let us go away. No pleasure is to be derived from seeing an old man roasted, and there is a horrible smell of burning. Are you waiting for some painter to come along and take a sketch of you, to match the pictures of Socrates in prison, with his companions at his side?' They were very angry and abusive at first, and some took to their sticks: but when I threatened to pick a few of them up and throw them on to the fire to keep their master company, they quieted down and peace was restored.[2]

In the following *Dialogue of the Dead* we meet, besides Hermes, the Conductor of the Dead, and Charon, who ferried them across the Styx to Hades, the following characters—an honest philosopher, a beauty, a prince, an athlete, an aristocrat, a general, a dishonest philosopher. The honest philosopher Menippus is a real character of the third century B. C. Born at Gadara—best known perhaps from St. Matthew's Gospel—he originated the serio-comic style of treating philosophic subjects, and, though a Cynic, is well treated by Lucian, who owed him much in form and matter.

Charon. I'll tell you how things stand. Our craft, as you see, is small, and leaky, and three-parts rotten; a single lurch, and she will capsize without more ado. And here are all you passengers, each with his luggage. If you come on board like that, I am afraid you may have cause to repent it; especially those who have not learnt to swim.

Hermes. Then how are we to make a trip of it?

Ch. I'll tell you. They must leave all this nonsense behind them on shore, and come aboard in their skins. As it is, there will be no room to spare. Stand by the gangway, and keep an eye on them, and make them strip before you let them pass.

[1] Of which P. was accused.

[2] *Death of Peregrinus* (extracts).

Her. Very good. Well, Number One, who are you ?

Men. Menippus. Here are my wallet and staff ; overboard with them. I had the sense not to bring my cloak.

Her. Pass on, Menippus ; you're a good fellow ; you shall have the seat of honour, up by the pilot, where you can see every one.—Here is a handsome person ; who is he ?

Char. Charmoleos of Megara ; the irresistible, whose kiss was worth a thousand pounds.

Her. That beauty must come off,—lips, kisses, and all ; the flowing locks, the blushing cheeks, the skin entire. That 's right. Now we're in better trim ;—you may pass on.—And who is the stunning gentleman in the purple and the diadem ?

Lam. I am Lampichus, prince of Gela.

Her. And what is all this splendour doing here, Lampichus ?

Lam. How ! would you have a prince come hither stripped ?

Her. A prince ! That would be too much to expect. But with a *shade* we must insist. Off with these things.

Lam. There, then : away goes my wealth.

Her. Pomp must go too, and pride ; we shall be overfreighted else.

Lam. At least let me keep my diadem and robes.

Her. No, no ; off they come !

Lam. Well ? That is all, as you see for yourself.

Her. There is something more yet : cruelty, folly, insolence, hatred.

Lam. There then : I am bare.

Her. Pass on.—And who may you be, my bulky friend ?

Dam. Damasias the athlete.

Her. To be sure ; many is the time I have seen you in the gymnasium.

Dam. You have. Well, I have peeled ; let me pass.

Her. Peeled ! my dear sir, what, with all this fleshy encumbrance ? Come, off with it ; we should go to the bottom if you put one foot aboard. And those crowns, those victories, remove them.

Dam. There ; no mistake about it this time ; I am as light as any shade among them.

Her. That 's more the kind of thing. On with you.—Crato, you can take off that wealth and luxury and effeminacy ; and we can't have that funeral pomp here, nor those ancestral glories either ; down with your rank and reputation, and any votes of thanks or inscriptions you have about you ; and you need not tell us what size your tomb was ; remarks of that kind come heavy.

Cra. Well, if I must, I must ; there 's no help for it.

Her. Hullo ! in full armour ? What does this mean ? and why this trophy ?

A General. I am a great conqueror ; a valiant warrior ; my country's pride.

Her. The trophy may stop behind ; we are at peace ; there is no demand for arms.—Whom have we here ? whose is this knitted brow, this flowing beard ? 'Tis some reverend sage, if outside goes for anything ; he mutters ; he is wrapped in meditation.

Men. That 's a philosopher, Hermes ; and an impudent quack into the bargain. Have him out of that cloak ; you will find something to amuse you underneath it.

Her. Off with your clothes first ; and then we will see to the rest. My goodness, what a bundle : quackery, ignorance, quarrelsomeness, vainglory ; idle questionings, prickly arguments, intricate conceptions; humbug and gammon and wishy-washy hair-splittings without end ; and hullo ! why here 's avarice, and self-indulgence, and impudence ! luxury, effeminacy and peevishness !—Yes, I see them all ; you need not try to hide them. Away with falsehood and swagger and superciliousness ; why, the three-decker is not built that would hold you with all this luggage.

A Philosopher. I resign them all, since such is your bidding.

Men. Have his beard off too, Hermes ; only look what a

ponderous bush of a thing ! There 's a good five pounds' weight there.

Her. Yes ; the beard must go.

Phil. And who shall shave me ?

Her. Menippus here shall take it off with the carpenter's axe ; the gangway will serve for a block.

Men. Oh, can't I have a saw, Hermes ? It would be much better fun.

Her. The axe must serve.—Shrewdly chopped !—Why, you look more like a man and less like a goat already.

Men. A little off the eyebrows ?

Her. Why, certainly ; he has trained them up all over his forehead, for reasons best known to himself. All 's ready. Loose the cable, and pull in the gangway ; haul up the anchor ; spread all sail ; and, pilot, look to your helm. Good luck to our voyage !—What are you all whining about, you fools ? You philosopher, late of the beard,—you're as bad as any of them.

Phil. Ah, Hermes : I had thought that the soul was immortal.

Men. He lies : that is not the cause of his distress.

Her. What is it, then ?

Men. He knows that he will never have a good dinner again ; never sneak about at night with his cloak over his head, going the round of the public-houses ; never spend his mornings in fooling boys out of their money, under the pretext of teaching them wisdom.

Her. Here we are in port. Away with you all to the judgement-seat ; it is straight ahead. The ferryman and I must go back for a fresh load.

Men. Good voyage to you, Hermes.—Let us be getting on ; what are you all waiting for ? We have got to face the judge, sooner or later ; and by all accounts his sentences are no joke ; wheels, racks, vultures are mentioned. Every detail of our lives will now come to light ! [1]

[1] *Dialogues of the Dead.*

The following extract from *Zeus as Tragedian* shows Lucian's treatment of religion, which made him an unintentional but valuable ally of the Christian apologists. He deals with classical theology exactly as Mr. George Morrow deals with the Middle Ages, keeping the old legends and characters but modernizing their thought and speech. In the dialogue we see the ancient religion through the eyes of a second-century sceptic: and this view may be compared with the views of Plutarch, Dion, and Maximus Tyrius to complete the picture.

Hermes. Wherefore thus brooding, Zeus? wherefore apart,
And palely pacing, as Earth's sages use?
Let me thy counsel know, thy cares partake;
And find thy comfort in a faithful fool.

Zeus. Speech hath no utterance of surpassing fear,
Tragedy holds no misery or woe,
But our divinest essence soon shall taste.

Athena. Alas, how dire a prelude to thy tale!

Hera. A truce to your passion, Zeus. *We* have not these good people's gift for farce or recitation; *we* have not swallowed Euripides whole, and cannot play up to you. Do you suppose we do not know how to account for your annoyance?

Zeus. Thou knowst not; else thy wailings had been loud.

Hera. Don't tell me; it 's a love affair; that 's what 's the matter with you. However, you won't have any 'wailings' from me; I am too much hardened to neglect. I suppose you have discovered some new Danae or Semele or Europa[1] whose charms are troubling you; all the symptoms—your groans and your tears and your white face—point to love and nothing else.

Zeus. Happy ignorance, that sees not what perils now forbid love and such toys!

Hera. Is your name Zeus, or not? and, if so, what else can possibly annoy you but love?

Zeus. Hera, our condition is most precarious; it is touch-and-go, as they call it, whether we are still to enjoy reverence

[1] Mortal women loved, according to legend, by Zeus.

and honour from the earth, or be utterly neglected and become of no account.

Zeus explains that a debate is going to take place between a Stoic, Timocles, and an Epicurean, Damis, on Providence; and there is reason to think that the latter, who is attacking the gods, will win.

Hera. This is really a serious matter; your ranting was not so uncalled for, Zeus.

Herm. My opinion is that an assembly be summoned and the community taken into counsel.

Hera. And I concur.

Ath. Sire, I dissent entirely; you should not fill Heaven with apprehensions, nor let your own uneasiness be visible, but take private measures to assure Timocles's victory and Damis's being laughed out of court.

Herm. It cannot be kept quiet, Zeus; the philosophers' debate is public, and you will be accused of despotic methods, if you maintain reserve on a matter of so great and general interest.

Zeus. Make proclamation and summon all, then. I approve your judgement.

Herm. Here, assemble, all ye gods; don't waste time, come along, here you are; we are going to have an important meeting.

Zeus. Good, Hermes; see, here they come pell-mell; now receive and place them in correct precedence, according to their material or workmanship; gold in the front row, silver next, then the ivory ones, then those of stone or bronze. A cross-division will give precedence to the creations of Phidias, Alcamenes, Myron, Euphranor,[1] and artists of that calibre, while the common inartistic jobs can be huddled together in the far corner, hold their tongues, and just make up the rank and file of our assembly.

Herm. All right; they shall have their proper places. But

[1] Famous Greek sculptors.

here is a point : suppose one of them is gold, and heavy at that, but not finely finished, quite amateurish and ill proportioned, in fact—is he to take precedence ? or is workmanship to count most ?

Zeus. It should by rights. Never mind, put the gold first.

Herm. I see ; property qualification, comparative wealth, is the test, not merit.—Gold to the front row, please.—Zeus, the front row will be exclusively foreign, I observe. You see the peculiarity of the Greek contingent : they have grace and beauty and artistic workmanship, but they are all marble or bronze—the most costly of them only ivory with just an occasional gleam of gold, the merest surface-plating ; and even those are wood inside, harbouring whole colonies of mice. Whereas Bendis here, Anubis there, Attis next door, and Mithras and Men,[1] are all of solid gold, heavy and intrinsically precious.

Posidon. Hermes, is it in order that this dog-faced Egyptian[2] person should sit in front of me, Posidon ?

Herm. Certainly. You see, Earth-shaker, the Corinthians had no gold at the time, so Lysippus[3] made you of paltry bronze ; Dog-face is a whole gold-mine richer than you.

Zeus. We are wasting time, Hermes : the debate should have been in full swing by now. Tell them to sit anyhow, according to taste ; we will have an *ad hoc* meeting another day, and then I shall know how to settle the question of precedence.

Herm. My goodness, what a noise ! what low vulgar bawling ! listen—' Hurry up with that carving ! ' ' Do pass the nectar ! ' 'Why no more ambrosia ? ' 'When are those hecatombs[4] coming ? ' ' Here, shares in that victim ! '

Zeus. Call them to order, Hermes ; this nonsense must cease, before I can give them the order of the day.

Herm. They do not all know Greek ; and I haven't the gift of

[1] Egyptian, Syrian, and other foreign deities.
[2] Anubis was dog-faced. Earthquakes were attributed to Posidon.
[3] Famous Greek sculptor. [4] Sacrifices of 100 animals.

tongues, to make myself understood by Scythians and Persians and Thracians and Celts. Perhaps I had better hold up my hand and signal for silence.

Zeus. Do.

Herm. Good ; they are as quiet as if they were so many teachers of elocution. Now is the time for your speech ; see, they are all hanging on your lips.

Zeus. Why—there is something wrong with me—Hermes, my boy—I will be frank with you. You know how confident and impressive I always was as a public speaker ?

Herm. I know ; I used to be in such a fright ; you threatened sometimes to let down your golden cord and heave up earth and sea from their foundations, gods included.

Zeus. But to-day, my child—it may be this terrible crisis—it may be the size of the audience—there *is* a vast number of gods here, isn't there—anyhow, my thoughts are all mixed, I shiver, my tongue seems tied. What is most absurd of all, my exordium is gone clean out of my head ; and I had prepared it on purpose to produce a good impression at the start.

At last Zeus adapts a speech of Demosthenes to the occasion and explains the crisis.

YOU now know the occasion of this meeting—no light one, ye gods, if you reflect how entirely our dignity, our revenue, our honour, depend on mankind. If they should accept as true either our absolute non-existence or, short of that, our indifference to them, farewell to our earthly sacrifices, attributes, honours ; we shall sit starving and ineffectual in Heaven ; our beloved feasts and assemblies, games and sacrifices, vigils and processions—all will be no more. So mighty is the issue ; believe me, it behoves us all to search out salvation ; and where lies salvation? In the victory and acceptance of Timocles, in laughter that shall drown the voice of Damis. For I doubt the unaided powers of Timocles, if our help be not accorded him.

Momus, the god of criticism, makes some suggestions.

HEAR, then, ye gods ; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. You must know, I foresaw all this clearly—our difficulty—the growth of these agitators ; it is ourselves who are responsible for their impudence ; I swear to you, we need not blame Epicurus nor his friends and successors for the prevalence of these ideas. Why, what can one expect men to think, when they see all life topsy-turvy—the good neglected, pining in poverty, disease, and slavery, detestable scoundrels honoured, rolling in wealth, and ordering their betters about, temple-robbers undetected and unpunished, the innocent constantly crucified and bastinadoed? With this evidence before them, it is only natural they should conclude against our existence.

Or again, when they hear the ballads about our loves, our wounds, captivities, thraldoms, quarrels, and endless vicissitudes (mark you, we claim all the while to be blissful and serene), are they not justified in ridiculing and belittling us ? And then we say it is outrageous if a few people who are not quite fools expose the absurdity and reject Providence ; why, we ought to be glad enough that a few still go on sacrificing to blunderers like us.

And at this point, Zeus—this meeting is private ; the human element is not represented among us (except by Heracles, Dionysus, Ganymede, and Asclepius,[1] and they are naturalized) —at this point, answer me a question frankly : did your interest in mankind ever carry you so far as to sift the good from the bad ? The answer is in the negative, I know. Very well, then ; had not a Theseus, on his way from Troezen to Athens, exterminated the malefactors as an incidental amusement, Sciron and Pityocamptes and Cercyon[2] and the rest of them might have gone on battening on the slaughter of travellers, for all you and your Providence would have done.

[1] Deified men. Dionysus was fabled to be the son of Zeus and Semele.
[2] Robbers, &c. killed by Theseus.

If the truth must out, we sit here with a single eye to one thing—does a man sacrifice and feed the altars fat? Everything else drifts as it may. We get our deserts, and shall continue to get them, when men open their eyes by degrees and find that sacrifices and processions bring them no profit. Before long you will find we are the laughing-stock of people like Epicurus, Metrodorus, Damis, who will have mastered and muzzled our advocates.

Pos. As for me, I live ordinarily under water, as you know, and follow an independent policy in the depths; that policy is to save sailors, set ships on their way, and keep the winds quiet, as best I may. However, I do take an interest in your politics too, and my opinion is that this Damis should be got rid of before the debate; the thunderbolt would do it, or some means could be found; else he might win—you say he is a plausible fellow, Zeus. It would teach them that there is a reckoning for telling such tales about us, too.

Zeus. You must be jesting, Posidon; you cannot have forgotten that we have no say in the matter? It is the Fates that spin a man's thread, whether he be destined to the thunderbolt or the sword, to fever or consumption. If it had depended on me, do you suppose I should have let those temple-robbers get off unblasted from Pisa the other day?—two of my curls shorn off weighing half a dozen pounds apiece. Moreover, they will think we are sensitive and angry; they will suspect that the reason why we get the man out of the way without waiting to see him matched with Timocles is that we are afraid of his arguments.

Pos. Dear, dear! I thought I had hit upon a good short cut to our object.

Zeus. Nonsense, there is something fishy about it, Posidon; and it is a dull notion too, to destroy your adversary beforehand; he dies unvanquished, and leaves his argument behind him still debatable and undecided.

Pos. Then the rest of you must think of something better, if 'fishy' is the best word you have for me.

Heracles. Father, I am only an alien, but I am not afraid to give my opinion. Let them begin their debate. Then, if Timocles gets the best of it, we can let the meeting go on, in our own interest ; on the other hand, if things look bad, I will give the portico a shake, if you like, and bring it down on Damis ; a confounded fellow like that is not to insult us.

Zeus. Now by Heracles—I can swear by you, I certainly cannot swear by your plan—what a crude—what a shockingly philistine suggestion ! What ! destroy all those people for one man's wickedness ? Besides, while you were alive, you might possibly have done a thing like that ; but now that you are a god, you surely understand that only the Fates are competent, and we cannot interfere ?

Herac. Then when I slew the lion or the Hydra, was I only the Fates' instrument ?

Zeus. Of course you were.

Herac. And now, suppose any one insults me, or robs my temple, or upsets an image of me, am I not to pulverize him, just because the Fates have not decreed it long ago ?

Zeus. Certainly not.

Herac. Then allow me to speak my mind ;

I'm a blunt man ; I call a spade a spade.

If this is the state of things with you, good-bye for me to your honours and altar-steam and fat of victims ; I shall be off to Hades. There, if I show my bow ready for action, the ghosts of the monsters I have slain will be frightened, at least.

A messenger arrives to report the opening of the debate.

Zeus. Then we have only, gods, to look over and listen. Let the Hours unbar, draw back the clouds, and open the doors of Heaven.

Upon my word, what a vast gathering ! And I do not quite like the looks of Timocles ; he is trembling ; he has lost his

head ; he will spoil everything ; it is perfectly plain, he will not be able to stand up to Damis. Well, there is one thing left us : we can pray for him

Inwardly, silently, lest Damis hear.

Ti. What, you miscreant, no gods ? no Providence ?

Da. No, no ; you answer my question first ; what makes you believe in them ?

Ti. None of that, now ; the onus probandi *is with you, scoundrel.*

Da. None of that, now ; it is with you.

Zeus. At this game ours is much the better man—louder-voiced, rougher-tempered. Good, Timocles ; stick to invective ; that is your strong point ; once you get off that, he will hook and hold you up like a fish.

Ti. Do you close your ears even to Zeus's thunder, atheist ?

Da. I clearly cannot shut out the thunder ; whether it is Zeus's thunder, you know better than I perhaps ; you may have interviewed the gods. Travellers from Crete tell another story : there is a tomb there with an inscribed pillar, stating that Zeus is long dead, and not going to thunder any more.

Mo. I could have told you that was coming long ago. What, Zeus ? pale ? and your teeth chattering ? What is the matter? You should cheer up, and treat such manikins with lofty contempt.

Zeus. Contempt ? See what a number of them there is—how set against us they are already—and he has them fast by the ears.

Ti. Blasphemer, have you ever been a voyage ?

Da. Many.

Ti. Well, then, the wind struck the canvas and filled the sails, and it or the oars gave you way, but there was a person responsible for steering and for the safety of the ship ?

Da. Certainly.

Ti. Now that ship would not have sailed, without a steersman ;

and do you suppose that this great universe drifts unsteered and uncontrolled?

Zeus. Good, this time, Timocles; a cogent illustration, that.

Da. But, you pattern of piety, the earthly navigator makes his plans, takes his measures, gives his orders, with a single eye to efficiency; there is nothing useless or purposeless on board; every thing is to make navigation easy or possible; but as for the navigator for whom you claim the management of this vast ship, he and his crew show no reason or appropriateness in any of their arrangements; the forestays, as likely as not, are made fast to the stern, and both sheets to the bows; the anchor will be gold, the beak lead, decoration below the water-line, and unsightliness above.

As for the men, you will find some lazy awkward coward in second or third command, or a fine swimmer, active as a cat aloft, and a handy man generally, chosen out of all the rest to—pump. It is just the same with the passengers: here is a gaol-bird accommodated with a seat next the captain and treated with reverence there a debauchee or parricide or temple-robber in honourable possession of the best place, while crowds of respectable people are packed together in a corner and hustled by their real inferiors. Consider what sort of a voyage Socrates and Aristides and Phocion had of it, on short rations, not venturing, for the filth, to stretch out their legs on the bare deck; and on the other hand what a comfortable, luxurious, contemptuous life it was for Callias or Midias or Sardanapalus.[1]

That is how things go on board your ship, sir wiseacre; and who shall count the wrecks? If there had been a captain supervising and directing, in the first place he would have known the difference between good and bad passengers, and in the second he would have given them their deserts; the better would have had the better accommodation above by his side, and the worse gone below; with some of the better he would have shared his meals and his counsels. So too for the crew: the keen sailor would have been made look-out man or captain of the watch, or given some sort of

[1] Types of luxury and arrogance.

precedence, and the lazy shirker have tasted the rope's-end half a dozen times a day. The metaphorical ship, your worship, is likely to be capsized by its captain's incompetence.

Mo. He is sweeping on to victory, with wind and tide.

Zeus. Too probable, Momus. And Timocles never gets hold of an effective idea ; he can only ladle out trite commonplaces higgledy-piggledy—no sooner heard than refuted.

Ti. Well, well ; my ship leaves you unconvinced; I must drop my sheet-anchor, then ; that at least is unbreakable.

Zeus. I wonder what it is.

Ti. See whether this is a sound syllogism ; can you upset it ?—If there are altars, there are gods : there are *altars ; therefore, there are gods. Now then.*

Da. Ha, ha, ha ! I will answer as soon as I can get done with laughing.

Ti. Will you never stop ? At least tell me what the joke is.

Da. Why, you don't see that your anchor (sheet-anchor, too) hangs by a mere thread. You depend on connexion between the existence of gods and the existence of altars, and fancy yourself safe at anchor ! As you admit that this was your sheet-anchor, there is nothing further to detain us.

Ti. You retire ; you confess yourself beaten, then ?

Da. Yes ; we have seen you take sanctuary at the altars under persecution. At those altars I am ready (the sheet-anchor be my witness) to swear peace and cease from strife.

Ti. You are playing with me, are you, you vile body-snatcher, you loathsome well-whipped scum ! As if we didn't know who your father was, how your mother was a harlot ! You strangled your own brother, you debauch the young ! Don't be in such a hurry ; here is something for you to take with you ; this broken pot will serve me to cut your foul throat.

Zeus. Damis makes off with a laugh, and the other after him, calling him names, mad at his insolence. He will get him on the head with that pottery, I know. And now, what are we to do ?

Herm. Why, the man in the comedy was not far out :

Put a good face on 't, and thou hast no harm.

It is no such terrible disaster, if a few people go away infected. There are plenty who take the other view—a majority of Greeks, the body and dregs of the people, and the foreigners to a man.

Zeus. Ah, Hermes, but there is a great deal in Darius's remark about Zopyrus—I would rather have had one ally like Damis than be the lord of a thousand Babylons.

As previous extracts show, Lucian's general sympathies are with the Epicureans. Of the other great schools the Stoics offended his common sense, the Cynics his taste. He reviews the philosophies in *The Sale of Creeds*, from which I select the portraits of Diogenes the Cynic, Socrates, and a Sceptic.

Zeus. Now get those benches straight there, and make the place fit to be seen. Bring up the lots, one of you, and put them in line. Give them a rub up first, though ; we must have them looking their best, to attract bidders. Hermes, you can declare the sale-room open, and a welcome to all comers.—*For Sale ! A varied assortment of Live Creeds. Tenets of every description.—Cash on delivery ; or credit allowed on suitable security.*

Hermes. Here they come, swarming in. No time to lose ; we must not keep them waiting.

Zeus. Well, let us begin.

Her. What about yonder grubby Pontian ? [1]

Zeus. Yes, he will do.

Her. You there with the wallet and cloak ; come along, walk round the room. Lot No. 2. A most sturdy and valiant creed, free-born. What offers ?

Second Dealer. Hullo, Mr. Auctioneer, are you going to sell a free man ?

[1] For Diogenes, born at Sinope in Pontus, and his philosophy see p. 28 f., which will explain the following allusions. Lucian's account of Cynicism is unfavourable rather than unfair. The Areopagus was an Athenian legal tribunal.

Her. That was the idea.

Second D. Take care, he may have you up for kidnapping. This might be matter for the Areopagus.

Her. Oh, he would as soon be sold as not. He feels just as free as ever.

Second D. But what is one to do with such a dirty fellow? He is a pitiable sight. One might put him to dig perhaps, or to carry water.

Her. That he can do and more. Set him to guard your house, and you will find him better than any watch-dog.—They call him Dog for short.

Second D. Where does he come from? and what is his method?

Her. He can best tell you that himself.

Second D. I don't like his looks. He will probably snarl if I go near him, or take a snap at me, for all I know. See how he lifts his stick, and scowls; an awkward-looking customer!

Her. Don't be afraid. He is quite tame.

Second D. Tell me, good fellow, where do you come from?

Dio. Everywhere.

Second D. What does that mean?

Dio. It means that I am a citizen of the world.

Second D. And your model?

Dio. Heracles.

Second D. Then why no lion's skin? You have the orthodox club.

Dio. My cloak is my lion's skin. Like Heracles, I live in a state of warfare, and my enemy is Pleasure; but unlike him I am a volunteer. My purpose is to purify humanity.

Second D. A noble purpose. Now what do I understand to be your strong subject? What is your profession?

Dio. The liberation of humanity, and the treatment of the passions. In short, I am the prophet of Truth and Candour.

Second D. Well, prophet; and if I buy you, how shall you handle my case?

Dio. I shall commence operations by stripping off your superfluities, putting you into fustian, and leaving you closeted with Necessity. Then I shall give you a course of hard labour. You will sleep on the ground, drink water, and fill your belly as best you can. Have you money ? Take my advice and throw it into the sea. With wife and children and country you will not concern yourself ; there will be no more of that nonsense. You will exchange your present home for a sepulchre, a ruin, or a tub. What with lupines and close-written tomes, your knapsack will never be empty ; and you will vote yourself happier than any king. Nor will you esteem it any inconvenience, if a flogging or a turn of the rack should fall to your lot. Above all, be bold, be impudent ; distribute your abuse impartially to king and commoner. They will admire your spirit. You will talk the Cynic jargon with the true Cynic snarl, scowling as you walk, and walking as one should who scowls ; an epitome of brutality. Away with modesty, good nature, and forbearance. Wipe the blush from your cheek for ever. Your hunting-ground will be the crowded city. You will live alone in its midst, holding communion with none, admitting neither friend nor guest ; for such would undermine your power. Scruple not to perform the deeds of darkness in broad daylight : and finally, when the fancy takes you, swallow a raw cuttlefish,[1] and die. Such are the delights of Cynicism.

Second D. Oh, vile creed ! Monstrous creed ! Avaunt !

Dio. But look you, it is all so easy ; it is within every man's reach. No education is necessary, no nonsensical argumentation. I offer you a short cut to Glory. You may be the merest clown—cobbler, fishmonger, carpenter, money-changer ; yet there is nothing to prevent your becoming famous. Given brass and boldness, you have only to learn to wag your tongue with dexterity.

Second D. All this is of no use to me. But I might make a

[1] Diogenes was said to have died from this.

sailor or a gardener of you at a pinch ; that is, if you are to be had cheap. Threepence is the most I can give.

Her. He is yours, to have and to hold. And good riddance to the brawling foul-mouthed bully.

Her. The Athenian there ? Old Chatterbox ? [1]

Zeus. By all means.

Her. Come forward !—A good sensible creed this. Who buys Holiness ?

Fifth D. Let me see. What are you good for ?

Soc. I teach the art of love.

Fifth D. A likely bargain for me ! I want a tutor for my young Adonis.

Soc. And could he have a better ? The love I teach is of the spirit, not of the flesh.

Fifth D. Very unconvincing that.

Soc. Now by Dog and Plane-tree, it is as I say !

Fifth D. Heracles ! What strange gods are these ?

Soc. Why, the Dog is a god, I suppose ? Is not Anubis made much of in Egypt ? Is there not a Dog-star in Heaven, and a Cerberus in the lower world ?

Fifth D. Quite so. My mistake. Now what is your manner of life ?

Soc. I live in a city of my own building ; I make my own laws, and have a novel constitution of my own.

Fifth D. I should like to hear some of your statutes.

Soc. You shall hear the greatest of them all. No woman shall be restricted to one husband.

Fifth D. Unparalleled generosity !—And now, what are the main features of your philosophy ?

Soc. Ideas and types of things. All things that you see, the earth and all that is upon it, the sea, the sky,—each has its counterpart in the invisible world.

[1] Socrates. By the Dog was a favourite Socratic oath. The allusions are to the Platonic dialogues on love, to the *Republic* where Socrates is made to argue for a (restricted) community of wives, and to the Socratic theory of ideas.

Fifth D. And where are they ?

Soc. Nowhere. Were they anywhere, they were not what they are.

Fifth D. I see no signs of these ' types ' of yours.

Soc. Of course not ; because you are spiritually blind. *I* see the counterparts of all things ; an invisible you, an invisible me ; everything is in duplicate.

Fifth D. Come, such a shrewd and lynx-eyed creed is worth a bid. Let me see. What do you want for him ?

Her. Five hundred.

Fifth D. Done with you. Only I must settle the bill another day.

Zeus. What have we left ?

Her. There is Scepticism. Come along and be put up. Quick 's the word. The attendance is dwindling ; there will be small competition. Well, who buys Lot 9 ?

Ninth D. I. Tell me first, though, what do you know ?

Sceptic. Nothing.

Ninth D. But how 's that ?

Sc. There does not appear to me to *be* anything.

Ninth D. Are not *we* something ?

Sc. How do I know that ?

Ninth D. And you yourself ?

Sc. Of that I am still more doubtful.

Ninth D. Well, you *are* in a fix ! And what have you got those scales for ?

Sc. I use them to weigh arguments in, and get them evenly balanced. They must be absolutely equal—not a feather-weight to choose between them ; then, and not till then, can I make uncertain which is right.

Ninth D. What else can you turn your hand to ?

Sc. Anything ; except catching a runaway.

Ninth D. And why not that ?

Sc. Because, friend, everything eludes my grasp.

Ninth D. I believe you. A slow, lumpish fellow you seem to be. And what is the end of your knowledge ?

Sc. Ignorance. Deafness. Blindness.

Ninth D. What ! sight and hearing both gone ?

Sc. And with them judgement and perception, and all, in short, that distinguishes man from a worm.

Ninth D. You are worth money !—What shall we say for him ?

Her. Four pounds.

Ninth D. Here it is. Well, fellow ; so you are mine ?

Sc. I doubt it.

Ninth D. Nay, doubt it not ! You are bought and paid for.

Sc. It is a difficult case. . . . I reserve my decision.

Ninth D. Now, come along with me, like a good slave.

Sc. But how am I to know whether what you say is true ?

Ninth D. Ask the auctioneer. Ask my money. Ask the spectators.

Sc. Spectators ? But can we be sure there are any ?

Ninth D. Oh, I'll send you to the treadmill. That will convince you with a vengeance that I am your master.

Sc. Reserve your decision.

Ninth D. Too late. It is given.

Her. Stop that wrangling and go with your purchaser. Gentlemen, we hope to see you here again to-morrow, when we shall be offering some lots suitable for plain men, artisans, and shopkeepers.

The following extract from a dialogue, where Lucian describes a visit to a philosopher, who may or may not have been a real person, shows his ideal of life, and Rome as it appeared to an educated Greek. (Compare the picture of Rome, drawn a few years earlier, in *Revelation* xviii.) The analogies with modern plutocracy are obvious.

HIS first words were in praise of Greece, and in particular of the Athenians. They are brought up, he said, to poverty and to philosophy. The endeavours, whether of foreigners or of their own countrymen, to introduce luxury into their midst find no favour with them. When a man comes

among them with this view, they quietly set about to correct his tendency, and by gentle degrees to bring him to a better course of life. He mentioned the case of a wealthy man who arrived at Athens in all the vulgar pomp of retinue and gold and gorgeous raiment, expecting that every eye would be turned upon him in envy of his lot ; instead of which, they heartily pitied the poor worm, and proceeded to take his education in hand. Not an ill-natured word, not an attempt at direct interference : it was a free city ; he was at liberty to live in it as he thought fit. But when he made a public nuisance of himself in the baths or gymnasiums, crowding in with his attendants, and taking up all the room, some one would whisper as if the words were not meant to reach his ears : ' He is afraid he will never come out from here alive ; yet all is peace ; there is no need of such an army.' The remark would be overheard, and would have its educational effect. They soon eased him of his embroidery and purple, by playful allusions to flower and colour. ' Spring is early.'—' How did that peacock get here ? '—' His mother must have lent him that shawl,'—and so on. The same with the rest, his rings, his elaborate coiffure, and his table excesses. Little by little he came to his senses, and left Athens very much the better for the public education he had received.

He further commended the Athenian liberty, and unpretentious style of living ; the peace and learned leisure which they so abundantly enjoy. To dwell among such men, he declared, is to dwell with philosophy ; a single-hearted man, who has been taught to despise wealth, may here preserve a pure morality ; no life could be more in harmony with the determined pursuit of all that is truly beautiful. But the man over whom gold has cast its spell, who is in love with riches, and measures happiness by purple raiment and dominion, who, living his life among flatterers and slaves, knows not the sweets of freedom, the blessings of candour, the beauty of truth ; he who has given up his soul to Pleasure, and will serve no other mistress,

whose heart is set on gluttony and wine and women, on whose tongue are deceit and hypocrisy ; he again whose ears must be tickled with lascivious songs, and the voluptuous notes of flute and lyre ;—let all such (he cried) dwell here in Rome ; the life will suit them. Our streets and market-places are filled with the things they love best. They may take in pleasure through eye and ear, nostril and palate. The turbid stream surges everlastingly through our streets ; avarice, perjury, adultery,—all tastes are represented. Under that rush of waters, modesty, virtue, uprightness, are torn from the soul ; and in their stead grows the tree of perpetual thirst, whose flowers are many strange desires.[1]

[1] *Nigrinus.*

EPILOGUE

It is a popular belief that the Greek genius died with Aristotle, and produced little or nothing of value after the classic age.[1] It would be as true to say that the English genius died with Milton. The foregoing chapters show how fruitful Hellenism continued to be, and how, as with Christianity, its widest influence and some of its most splendid creations belong to the years when Greece had 'turned to the Gentiles' and taken up a mission to the world.

Are we then to hold that the Greek literature written in the 500 years after Aristotle was as great as that written in the 500 years which preceded him? If not, what is the difference? Is there in the later age, as we are accustomed to assume, if not a decadence an intellectual decline? Did Hellenism lose its power or change its nature? In what sense, if any, are Epicurus and Epictetus, Plutarch and Lucian inferior to the earlier writers? How do the classic and the post-classic ages differ? These questions have probably occurred to most readers of this book. They are the more important, because they are part of a larger question still. In the second century of our era the Greek genius was on the verge of its final decay. By the end of the fourth century it was decadent, destined thereafter to produce nothing of permanent interest except a few epigrams. When did that decline set in? What were its causes? When do we see the first symptoms of it? Can we trace the development of the disease?

This problem of the decay of a great national genius is of intense interest. To solve it would be a sociological study not yet attempted and well worth attempting. But it does not fall within the scope of this book. In the writers with whom I have dealt there are faults and weaknesses, but there is no mortal disease. Indeed in pure intellectual power, if such a thing could be measured, Lucian and Aristides would probably prove not seriously inferior to Thucydides or Herodotus. Yet there is an obvious difference between the two ages. Epicurus and the early Cynics may be ranked with the classics. But no one could suppose that Dion or Plutarch lived before 300 B.C. The difference between the classics and the post-classics is present, unmistakable, however hard to define. We may try briefly to indicate what it is.

[1] By 'classic' I mean the literature before 300 B.C., by 'post-classic' the literature after that date. This distinction, though arbitrary, may serve.

There are encroaching Eastern influences, faint in Plutarch, undisguised in Apollonius of Tyana.

Some of the post-classic writers are affected by the loss of that contact with political life and broad human interests which did so much to keep the early literature healthy and whole-minded. The great literature of the world has been produced by men who either lived in the main stream of human life, or at least were keenly interested in it and sensitive to its flow. Wordsworth would have been a lesser writer, if he had never seen revolutionary France; Milton, if he had not been Secretary of State; Aeschylus, if he had not fought at Marathon; Thucydides, if he had not commanded at Amphipolis. Academies, coteries, artistic backwaters never produce great literature. We see the taint of them in Aristides and Philostratus.

Many of the post-classic writers are encumbered by the past, and pay the penalty exacted from all heirs of a great tradition of literature or culture. Their lips echo memories. In literature the sophists, in philosophy Dion, Plutarch, and Maximus Tyrius, are dominated by great predecessors, by the legacy of a national literature. Like modern philosophers, they are tempted to piece their houses together from the ruins of earlier systems. They are never emancipated from the past: they are never new.

But the real difference between the classic and post-classic ages lies deeper. The earlier writers are pioneers, opening up the kingdom of thought for the first time in human history. They are essentially inquirers, searchers, adventurers, explorers. Their goals are knowledge and truth. Their motives are interest and curiosity. Hence there breathes round them a freshness, an intellectual stimulus and excitement, that could never come again in the history of their race. They differ from the later writers, as the makers of the Indian Empire, a Clive or a Warren Hastings, differ from a modern Lieutenant-Governor; as the first pioneers to cross the Mississippi differ from a modern settler in Texas or Nebraska. Their successors had different desires and aims. Some, like the sophists and, in a degree, Lucian, enjoyed and exploited the rich legacy of literature and culture which they had inherited. Others became preachers of gospels, saviours of souls. They treated life not as a matter for investigation and inquiry, but as something to be lived. It was for them a problem of practice, not of theory. Some of these, like

Epicurus, the Cynics, the Stoics, founded great churches that sheltered innumerable souls. Others, like Plutarch or Dion, preached individual creeds. They thought more of edification, less of truth, than did Socrates or Thucydides. They became pastors and guides of mankind. To this change of interest is chiefly due the change of atmosphere of which we are conscious in the post-classic period. The spirit of inquiry disappears, and with it the exciting, bracing air which the fifth century B.C. breathed. Truth, which is not always a companion of edification, takes a lower place. (If we are looking for a premonitory symptom of what later became a fatal disease, it is here that we shall find it.) Creative poetry, 'the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science', recedes together with the inquiring spirit, of which it is a close kinsman. In their place we have ideals which are great but different.

Yet it is still the spirit of Hellenism, though of a Hellenism which has turned to other things. However different from the earlier Greeks, the later writers are still lineal children of Greece, inheritors of her tradition, sharers in the incomparable vitality of a genius which was a thousand years old and still unexhausted when Lucian died. It was the Hellenic love of beauty, narrowed now to the worship of literary art, that inspired the sophists. It was the Hellenic belief in reason as the guide of life that inspired Epicurus no less than his critic, Plutarch, Dion the missionary no less than Lucian the scoffer. Above all, these later writers are Hellenic in their general attitude to life. Living eagerly in the material world, they are not materialists. Capable of enjoying money, pleasure, and power, they do not become their slaves. They have not forgotten the greatest lesson which Greece taught the world, that the only good things are the goods of the soul. Even Epicurus, for whom soul and mind are an accidental collocation of atoms, holds that pleasure resides 'not in a succession of revels and banquets, nor in sensual enjoyment, nor in the delights of the table of the rich, but in sober reasoning', and that 'we cannot live pleasurably unless we live wisely and justly and nobly'.

It is surprising and a little disquieting to reflect, that this world, so prosperous, so contented, so sure of itself, was on the edge of storms which were to sweep its civilization away.

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